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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CLAIRE MARTIN IN ENGLISH:
THEORY AND PRACTICE OF LITERARY TRANSLATION

by

© DIANE LEE SMITH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Claire Martin in English: Theory and Practice of Literary Translation," submitted by Diane Lee Smith in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

The practice of literary translation has led to the formulation of theories and delimitation of problems with regard to rendering works from one language into another. Translators themselves usually propose theories intended to justify their own methods; independent theorists, finding no scientific basis of correspondence between any two languages, sometimes deny the legitimacy of the translation process. Practice nevertheless continues apart from theoretical speculation, and requires the resolution of problems on several levels: the purpose of the translation, the relationship of the source and target languages in space and time, and the genre of the work in question.

Claire Martin's prize-winning collection of short stories, Avec ou sans amour, merits critical attention because it introduces the thematic and stylistic tendencies that reappear in her later work. The stories are of interest to the translator not only because of their literary merit, but also because of the characteristic difficulties they present, both collectively and separately. The source and target languages are closely related, but the short story form necessitates great concision in the original and corresponding precision in the translation. The effect of Claire Martin's unusual vocabulary and stylistic devices is

often merely approximated or even lost in translation, where the first consideration is to write idiomatic English. The study of general theory and problems is thus of only limited help to the translator in dealing with an individual author and an individual work.

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CHAPTER I

THEORY AND PROBLEMS OF LITERARY TRANSLATION

The field of translation includes scientific and technical translation, interpretation (or oral translation), and dubbing of films, but it is primarily literary translation that has given rise to the formulation of theories and the delimitation of problems concerned with rendering works of one language into another. Translation was practiced before it had any theoretical basis, and will continue to be practiced despite theories which affirm its illegitimacy or impossibility, so that the study of both theory and problems is necessary in order to present both the ideal and the reality.

Early theories, not all of which have been superseded in the present, begin with the assumption that literary translation is an art. They are frequently expounded by translators themselves, whose intent is to justify the methods they have employed. The main question is the extent to which the translation must be literal or may be free; the answer depends upon whether the translator is to be faithful to the author and thus as literal as possible, faithful to the reader and thus free to alter according to contemporary taste, or faithful to himself in attempting to create a new work of art. Most theorists accept faithfulness to the author as

their first principle, although they do not necessarily adhere to it. Even then, they have to deal with the problem of matter versus manner, of sense versus style.

Proponents of literal translation, both past and present, usually realize that a word-for-word rendering, though technically faithful to the matter, is detrimental to the manner. Horace, in his Ars Poetica (20. B.C.) warns against such extreme literalness - "nec verbo verbum curabis reddere fidus interpres"[1]--as well as against imitation. Saint Jerome, writing "De optimo genere interpretandi" (A.D. 395), states the dilemma of the translator: an interlinear rendering is awkward or even nonsensical and a rearrangement appears as a dereliction of duty. In his solution, Jerome concurs with Horace: "Non verbem e verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu."[2] Cicero, referring to his translations of Aeschines and Demosthenes, says in his treatise "De optimo genero oratorum" (46 B.C.):

> I did not translate them literally, but as an orator, preserving the same ideas and forms, or tropes as it were, in language consonant with our usage. In doing this, I did not think it necessary to translate word for word; I preserved the general style and force of the language. For I did not believe it was my duty to count out words to the reader like coins, but rather to pay them out by weight.3

Hence he states the principle of compensation, whereby the translator is to make up for deficiencies by other additions, and which is applied by most translators. Modern standards generally require this degree of literalness for an acceptable

translation.

At some periods in history, translators emphasize fidelity to the reader, which justifies additions, omissions, paraphrases, improvements and corrections in the light of contemporary standards. Alexander Barclay, in "The Argument" of The Ship of Fools (1509), exhorts his readers:

> . . . to take no displeasour for yt is not translated word by worde acordinge to ye verses of my actour. For I have but only drawen into our moder tunge, in ruder language the sentenies of the verses as here as the parcyte of my wyt wyl suffer me, some tyme addynge, some tyme detractinge and takinge away suche thinges a semeth me necessary and superflue.4

Extensive alteration of the original text occurs particularly in seventeenth-century France, when audiences demand adherence to classical taste. The result of such procedures may be successful as an independent work, or may represent a functional equivalent of the source, in a different culture, but is nevertheless inadequate as a translation.

The translator who desires to create a work of art in his own right sometimes resorts to the extreme of free translation--to imitation or adaptation. Abraham Cowley, in the "Preface" to his Pindarique Odes (1656), expresses the wish to be more than a translator and justifies it by referring to the inferiority of copies to originals:

> . . . I never saw a Copy better than the Original, which indeed cannot be otherwise; for Men resolving in no case to shoot beyond the Mark, it is a thousand to one if they shoot not short of it. It does not at all trouble me that the Grammarians perhaps will not suffer this libertine way of rendering foreign authors,

> to be called Translation; for I am not so much enamoured of the Name Translator, as not rather to wish to be Something Better, tho' it want yet a Name.[5]

The writer who uses the original text merely for inspiration produces a work which has no value as a translation, but which occasionally achieves greatness as a work of art. North's Lives of Plutarch, Chapman's Homer, and Fitzgerald's Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam, for example, are very free translations which are themselves masterpieces.

The tendency of some modern theorists is to approach translation as a science, or as an art based on a science. Often they themselves do not practice translation, and rather than regarding it as absorption followed by recreation they diminish its creative aspect. In machine translation, particularly, the artistic process is excluded. The fundamental question behind scientific theories is not whether translation should be free or literal, but whether it is legitimate or even possible. Stylistic theories demonstrate the legitimacy of translation, but linguistic ones sometimes argue its impossibility.

Stylistics is concerned with both linguistics and aesthetics: a work of art has an individual character as well as shared elements--linguistic structures, literary conventions, aesthetic notions--peculiar to the literary tradition which it embodies. Comparing the elements of two different traditions makes it possible to formulate laws of translation from one to the other; hence, comparative stylistics reconciles

linguistic and aesthetic factors in accounting for all levels involved in literary translation.[6] Vinay and Darbelnet's Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais: méthode de traduction explains the basic assumptions and methods of comparative stylistics which are applicable to the translation of any language.

First of all, Vinay and Darbelnet consider translation to be less an art than a precise discipline, with certain techniques that frequently reduce the number of possible translations of a given source to only one:

> Il est permis de supposer que si nous connaissions mieux les méthodes qui gouvernent le passage d'une langue à l'autre, nous arriverions dans un nombre toujours plus grand de cas à des solutions uniques.[7]

The application of the techniques, however, is itself an art: ". . . l'utilisation des techniques est, de plein droit, un art apparenté à l'art de la composition qui préside à la rédaction du texte original".[8] After stating their thesis, the authors establish theoretical principles as an introduction to the actual techniques, some of which apply to direct and some to indirect translation.

According to Vinay and Darbelnet, direct translation occurs where the message of the source language can be perfectly transposed into the target language. In this case, the three methods used are borrowing, calquing, and literal translation. Borrowing from the source language to fill a gap in the target language may be a last resort, or a

deliberate stylistic device--for example, to add local colour. Calquing consists of borrowing an expression and translating each of its elements separately, so that the result is a new expression which may or may not respect the syntax of the target language. Literal translation, finally, is the process which results in a correct and idiomatic text that is theoretically a unique and reversible solution. The possibility of literal translation depends on the philological and cultural relationship of the languages involved.[9]

Indirect translation is necessitated when literal translation changes the meaning, is meaningless, is structurally impossible, has no corresponding context in the target language, or has a correspondence on a different level of language. There are four techniques which may be employed to overcome the difficulties: transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. Transposition is "le procédé qui consiste à remplacer une partie du discours par une autre, sans changer le sens du message",[10] for example, replacing a subordinate clause by a prepositional phrase. Such transposition may be facultative or obligatory, depending on whether the target language possesses only one or more possible constructions. Modulation, which consists in varying the message by changing the point of view, is required when literal translation or transposition gives a result that is contrary to the spirit of the target language. Like transposition, modulation may be free or fixed, but the

difference is not marked and the tendency is toward fixed modulation:

> On voit donc qu'entre la modulation figée et la modulation libre, il n'y a qu'une différence de degré, et qu'une modulation libre peut, à chaque instant, devenir une modulation figée dès qu'elle devienne fréquente, ou dès qu'elle est sentie comme la solution unique . . .11

Equivalence is the rendering of the same situation by different stylistic and structural devices; these are mostly fixed, and include idioms, clichés, proverbs, and locutions. Adaptation, finally, applies when the situation of the message in the source language does not exist in the target language, and must be replaced by an equivalent situation.[12] Vinay and Darbelnet point out that these seven methods of direct and indirect translation are applicable to all levels of language--lexicon, structure, and semantics--and that several methods may be used in the translation of a single phrase.

Gilbert Barth, in Recherches sur la fréquence et la valeur des parties du discours en français, en anglais et en espagnol, does a statistical survey of one aspect of comparative stylistics studied by Vinay and Darbelnet--transposition. He defines it as "le transfert de la valeur sémantique d'une partie du discours dans la langue de départ à une autre partie du discours dans la langue d'arrivée".[13] For the sake of simplicity he establishes six parts of speech--noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, and particule (preposition and conjunction considered together)--which appear in all three

languages. Then he proceeds to determine the frequency of each part of speech in original texts and translations, and the number of transpositions in the translations, whether obligatory or optional. His conclusions are that certain parts of speech occur more frequently in one language than in another, and that the frequency in the original affects that in the translation. His particular observations, however, are less important here than his practical application of the theory of comparative stylistics.

The relationship between linguistics and translation is studied in Georges Mounin's Les Problèmes théoriques de la traduction, which summarizes various linguistic theories and their implications with regard to the legitimacy or possibility of translation. Structuralism asserts that words do not acquire meaning from objects and concepts preceding them, but depend on other words to delimit their meaning:

> . . . nous surprenons donc, au lieu d'idées données d'avance, des valeurs émanant du système. Quand on dit qu'elles correspondent à des concepts, on sous-entend que ceux-ci sont purement différentiels, définis non pas positivement par leur contenu, mais négativement par leurs rapports avec les autres termes du système. Leur plus exact caractéristique est d'être ce que les autres ne sont pas.14

The logical conclusion is that translation dependent on the correspondence of words in two different languages is unfeasible, because the words cover different conceptual fields. Behaviourism, which also attempts to give an objective basis to the notion of meaning, considers meaning to include

the situation in which the speaker makes a statement, as well as the behaviour of the hearer. It is therefore impossible to grasp the meaning entirely, because it depends on too many factors:

> The situations which prompt people to utter speech, include every object and happening in their universe. In order to give a scientifically accurate definition of meaning for every form of language, we should have to have a scientifically accurate knowledge of everything in the speakers' world.15

By the same token, translation is either theoretically unfounded or practically impossible, for if meaning is inaccessable within the confines of one language it cannot be rendered in another.

Distributional linguistics, instead of using meaning as the point of departure for textual analysis, analyzes the text in order to extract the meaning. That is, it studies the recurrence and relationships of different elements of language, as in the series: press, impress, compress, etc. A series such as: declare, debauch, decrepit, etc., however, necessitates the re-introduction of the concept of meaning to distinguish the different functions of the element "de". As a result of such a concession, "les significations - c'est-à-dire la sémantique—chassées non sans bonnes raisons, par la porte théorique, rentrent dans la linguistique distributionaliste elle-même, et non sans autres bonnes raisons, par la fenêtre de la pratique".[16] In admitting the notion of meaning as independent of a given text or linguistic system,

distributional linguistics also admits the legitimacy of translation.

Glossemantic theory is another that rejects the idea of meaning as a basis for linguistic analysis. It postulates a substance of expression -i.e. phonetic sounds--and a substance of content--i.e. ideas, impressions, or thoughts. The latter is manifested in different forms in different languages, but itself has no fixed form and is inaccessible as such. Nevertheless, the theory does not deny that it is possible to determine meaning after establishing other bases for linguistic analysis, nor that a relatively specific and stable signification exists for every linguistic utterance:

> Mais ce postulat qui soutient, empiriquement sans doute, aussi provisoirement qu'on le voudra, la légitimité de toute recherche linguistique, soutient également - sous les mêmes réserves - la légitimité de l'opération traduisante.17

The existence of meaning makes possible the practice of translation.

The preceding theories attempt to define the systems of internal relationships that constitute language, without having recourse to semantics, which they consider the least scientific area of descriptive linguistics. Although they succeed in proving the difficulty of establishing specific significations, they do not entirely destroy the theoretical or practical foundations of translation. Still, they assume that the structures of language emerge from the structures of the universe and the human mind. Other theories reject

that assumption and claim that each system of language contains its own vision of the world:

> . . . cette philosophie refusait de voir dans la langue un outil passif de l'expression. Elle l'envisageait plutôt comme un principe actif qui impose à la pensée un ensemble organisé de distinctions et de valeurs. Tout système linguistique renferme une analyse du monde extérieur qui lui est propre et qui diffère de celle d'autres langues ou d'autres étapes de la même langue.18

The justification for the claim is the fact that each language perceives different aspects of reality and divides the same aspect into different unities. This theory, and those similar to it, presumably prove the invalidity and impossibility of translation, since it depends on a non-existent correspondence of world views in different languages.

In addition to theories which conclude that each language represents the world differently and that each man sees the world through his own language, there are theories which use sociology to show that linguistic structures in fact represent different worlds: "On admet, aujourd'hui, qu'il y a des 'cultures' (ou des 'civilisations') profondément différentes, qui constituent non pas autant de 'visions du monde' différentes, mais autant de 'mondes' différents."[19] The problems posed in finding equivalences between different languages fall into five categories--ecology, technology, society, religion, and linguistics. An ecological problem, for example, is that some zones of the earth have only two seasons while others have four; similarly, agriculture and

industry, designation of family units and members, religions and doctrines, and thought structures based on language structures all differ to varying degrees. Different civilizations therefore constitute different worlds that are, to some extent at least, impenetrable to each other. Cultural phenomena increase the difficulty of translation, which is already great because of linguistic factors.

Other concepts partly based on sociology tend to show that translation is possible in practice if not in theory. One such concept is that universals of language result from universals underlying them; the latter may be cosmological, biological, physiological, sociological, cultural, or linguistic. All men share their existence as human beings inhabiting the planet earth: "Comme tous les hommes habitent la même planète et ont en commun d'être hommes avec ce que cela comporte d'analogies physiologiques et psychologiques, on peut s'attendre à découvrir un certain parallélisme dans l'évolution de tous les idiomes."[20] They furthermore develop similar cultural features: "It has been shown that certain aspects of culture, including language, technology, religion, education, social control, are found in all societies. Moreover, many specific details of culture are also universal."[21] These common characteristics lead to common (though morphologically different) designations, with the result that it is possible to translate at least universal notions if not particular ones.

In general, theories of translation that regard it as an art are primarily concerned with form and content: the question is to what degree the artist may depart from the structure and ideas of the source language when rendering it in the target language. Stylistic theories introduce a scientific aspect: the comparison of syntactic elements in two languages establishes rules of translation and diminishes the number of possible choices. Linguistic theories question the notion of meaning, and thus the very basis of translation; some reject it entirely and some admit it with reservations. The practice of translation, however, continues more or less independent of theoretical speculation.

In practice, translation entails numerous problems, not only on the level of language, but also of an aesthetic and ethical order. It is very difficult to formulate general rules for solving them because of the large number of factors that must be taken into account. Some of the contradictory instructions according to which translators may proceed are:

1. A translation must give the words of the original.
2. A translation must give the ideas of the original.
3. A translation should read like an original work.
4. A translation should read like a translation.
5. A translation should reflect the style of the original.
6. A translation should possess the style of the translation.
7. A translation should read as a contemporary of the original.
8. A translation should read as a contemporary of the translation.
9. A translation may add to or omit from the original.
10. A translation may never add to or omit from the original.

11. A translation of verse should be in prose.
12. A translation of verse should be in verse.[22]

The main factors determining which instructions to follow are the purpose of the translation, the relationship of the two languages, and the genre of the work - as well as the judgment and particular ability of the translator. The latter must study all possibilities and establish priorities according to the situation.

The fact that translations have widely divergent goals and thus highlight different aspects of the original is emphasized by Theodore Savory in The Art of Translation. Purely utilitarian translations, such as that of public notices, frequently present a one-to-one correspondence with the words and ideas of the originals because of their straightforward nature. Almost all other translations, however, require a choice somewhere. A translation made for teaching purposes is generally literal, so that it sacrifices refinement of thought and style (and, in the case of poetry, verse). One destined for the general reader of literature might paraphrase the main ideas at the expense of precision of vocabulary and style, and might add or omit details. Specialists in literature, on the other hand, require accuracy of vocabulary and style as well as content. In scientific and technical translation, where information is most important, the translator must, above all, be familiar with the subject and its terminology.[23] Translations also vary according to the reader's knowledge of the original language: he may be

unfamiliar with it, may be studying it, may have learned and forgotten it, or may have a good knowledge of it. The first is satisfied with a free translation which he can read with ease; the second requires a literal one clearly indicating foreign constructions and usage; the third prefers a translation that sounds like one and seems to preserve the flavour of the original language; the last looks for both the matter and the manner of the original.[24]

The aspects to be emphasized in a translation are not determined merely by the type of reader for whom it is intended; the relationship of the source and target languages raises stylistic questions which the translator must answer to his own satisfaction. Basically, the problem is that the two languages are separated in space, in time, or in both. If they differ only geographically, like Modern French and Modern English, the translator naturally uses contemporary language. If they differ historically, like Chaucerian English and Modern English, this task is obviously to transform the old into the current language. Difficulties occur when the languages are separated in both space and time. The translator must then decide whether to attempt to preserve the outmoded character of the original by employing an antiquated style, or whether to follow modern usage. Both methods can be justified, but the second is usually preferable:

> . . . the problem may be put thus. Cervantes published Don Quixote in 1605; should that story be translated into contemporary English, such as

> he would have used at that time had he been an Englishman, or into the English of today? . . . in most cases the reader is justified in expecting the kind of language that he himself is accustomed to use. If a function of the translation is to produce in the minds of its readers the same emotions as those produced by the original in the minds of its readers, the answer is clear.25

One could perhaps argue that faithfulness to the author demands reproduction of all his stylistic peculiarities, but one could also argue that it is more faithful to translate into real contemporary language then into spurious historical language.

As the gap in space or time between the two languages widens, the purely linguistic difficulty of translation becomes greater. Each individual has its own range of vocabulary and his own set of definitions, so that communication between contemporaries who speak the same tongue is imperfect. It becomes more faulty between regions (e.g., Yorkshire and Kent) and countries (e.g., Britain and the United States), even where the same language is spoken. Translation from one tongue to another similarly involves problems of larger magnitude as it deals with a closely related group (e.g., Romance languages), distantly related groups (e.g., Romance and Germanic languages), or unrelated groups (e.g., Indo-European and Semitic languages). Incomprehension likewise increases as distance in time increases, until the original language is forgotten or even lost. Style is therefore not the only consideration; the relatively simple matter of finding

equivalent denotations and connotations becomes increasingly complicated as well.

Every genre of literature presents the translator with particular challenges. Literary prose is easier to translate than poetry or drama, but difficult neverthless. A single word in one language does not necessarily correspond to a single word in another, partly because words often have multiple meanings; the English "square", for example, may appear in French as "carré", "juste" or "vrai", "place", "équerre", or "égaliser". Furthermore, a word does not always retain its original meaning; the French "sinistre" and English "sinister" do not correspond to the Latin "sinister". Nor do words with the same origin necessarily have the same meaning; "vicieux" and "vicious" (from the Latin "vitiosus") are not always interchangeable. The translator must consider not only denotation, but also connotation; he must choose equivalents according not only to lexical meaning, but also to accrued implications and associations. In some cases, because of cultural differences, there is no equivalent: just as the French have no expression for "fair play", the English have none for "savoir-faire".

Difficulties appear at the level of the phrase and sentence, not just at the level of the word. Idioms are constructions peculiar to a language which change or lose their meaning if translated literally: "Comment allez-vous?"

becomes "How do you go?" instead of "How are you?", and "Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça" becomes complete nonsense. Proverbs, on the other hand, may be semantically identical and grammatically correct when translated literally, but still fail to be equivalent. "Il ne faut pas vendre la peau de l'ours avant de l'avoir tué" is not "Don't sell the bearskin before you kill the bear", but "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched". Although it is often possible for the direct translation to have a more striking or unusual flavour, this flavour is one which the original has already lost through time.

Apart from purely linguistic phenomena, modes of expression arising from national characteristics affect the work of the translator. That is, he may be compelled to modify the actual words in order to depict accurately the emotions which they represent. The more volatile, for example, will tend to exaggerate, whereas the more subdued will tend to understate; in the same situation, a Frenchmen might exclaim, "C'est magnifique," and an Englishman remark, "It's not bad." Further contrasts can be made between French precision and rigourous logic, and English ambiguity and diffuseness. The translator must then choose between giving equivalents for what is actually written and offering approximations for what is presumably intended.[26]

The obstacles involved in the translation of literary prose are mainly those of sense; in poetry, there are further

obstacles of sense and additional ones of form. Images, metaphors, symbols, and other tropes appear in prose as well as in poetry, but more frequently in the latter, where they impede or even halt the process of translation. Word order and length--of sentences and paragraphs, or of lines and stanzas--are also more significant features in poetry. It is the characteristics which distinguish poetry from prose, however, that almost defy translation. Poetry is based on sound and rhythm, and words of identical or similar meaning in two different languages rarely resemble each other phonetically. Alliteration, assonance, rhyme, and onomatopoeia are therefore lost in a translation that concentrates on meaning, as are foot, meter, stanza, and other structures based on stress or length. On the other hand, a translation that attempts to reproduce the sound and rhythm of the original changes the sense, slightly or radically. The question then arises whether to translate verse into prose, and sacrifice form, or into verse, and sacrifice content. If the decision is to use verse, there is the further question whether it should be rhymed or unrhymed, fixed or free.

Arguments can be found to support all points of view. Some critics claim that a prose translation retains the substance of poetry--image, metaphor, and symbol, as well as effects of sound and rhythm; others feel that poetry has a specific function of subjectivity that prose cannot fulfill. Hilaire Belloc states that in order to translate the spiritual

effect, ". . . in general and especially for the longer flights and more especially for the epics, verse should be rendered into prose".[27] Alexander Fraser Tytler says that in a prose translation of verse, "The excursive range of the sentiments, and the play of fancey, which we admire in the original, degenerate . . . into mere raving and impertinence," and concludes "that it is impossible to do complete justice to any species of poetical composition in a prose translation; in other words, that none but a poet can translate a poet".[28] A prose translation perhaps conforms more closely to the actual phrasing of the original, but a verse translation allows a greater poetic licence with regard to other aspects:

> A verse translation gives at least an opportunity to indulge in figures of speech and to adopt the varied word order which the original contained, and which some translators wish to preserve whenever possible. In general the power of verse to stir the emotions is greater than the power of prose, so that to choose to make a prose translation of a poem is to impose a handicap on the translator and ask him to sacrifice a portion of his effect before he has begun.[29]

The choice between prose and verse depends on whether the purpose of the translation is educational or purely literary, and whether the translator is faithful to the author or the reader: in a literary translation intended to have the same effect on readers as the original, verse is probably more appropriate.

The translator does not decide upon free, unrhymed, or rhymed verse simply according to the original. Free verse,

a relatively modern form, often combines the maximum reproduction of the poetic devices in the original with the minimum violence to the content, but it is not always suitable for rendering such rigid schemes as the sonnet, alexandrian couplets, or terza rima. Unrhymed verse permits the retention of most of the original devices while adhering to a strict metre, but may have less impact than the rhymed original. The arguments in favour of rhyme are that it is more representative if the original is rhymed (or otherwise rigidly structured according to the literary tradition to which it belongs), and evokes a greater emotive reaction in the reader. Rhyme, however, entails adjustment of the content--distortion, omission, or addition--so that it will conform to the structure. If the translator is working with a language wherein poetry is not based on stress but on syllables (eg. French) or quantity (eg. Latin), he may prefer to reproduce the verse form of the source language even though it is uncommon or nonexistent in the target language; he need not limit himself to traditional modes.

The translator of poetry thus has no fixed guide to follow in choosing between sound and sense, verse and prose, or free and bound verse. It is possible, however, to formulate general rules which are helpful in limited situations, for example:

> In order to achieve maximum equivalence, we should match the following properties of the original in the order indicated by the arrows:

I. Semantic: a. direct → b. associative
II. Formal: 1. overt → 2. distributional

1. overt	2. distributional
a. metre	a. peak position
b. rhyme	b. position in specific line
c. sound	c. arrangement in specific order

> If a sacrifice has to be made, maintain (a.) over (b.), (b.) over (c.), etc. Usually, in an arrangement of rigid form, lower ranking positions will have to be neglected. These suggestions refer definitely to the translation of texts in the European tradition.30

In the translation of poetry compromise is inevitable, and the final result is at best an approximation of the original if it is to possess poetic qualities itself.

The translation of a play adds aural and visual considerations to semantic and formal problems, if it is to be performed and not just read. As well as the original author and the audience (replacing the reader), the translator must take the actor into account. The latter has to be able to match words with vocal and physical gestures:

> The first law in translating for the theater is that everything must be speakable. It is necessary at all times for the translator to hear the actor speaking in his mind's ear. He must be conscious of the gestures of the voice that speaks--the rhythm, the cadence, the interval. He must also be conscious of the look, the feel, and the movement of the actor while he is speaking. . . . Only in this way can the translator hear the words in such a way that they play upon each other in harmony, in conflict, and in pattern--and hence as dramatic.31

On stage, the action is continuous and affords the spectator little opportunity to appreciate refinements of language. The smooth transition between speeches and situations is therefore more important than the precise rendering of the

original, where the two come into conflict. Because of the momentary nature of drama, effects which are lost cannot be retrieved later; hence, more freedom is permissible than in prose and poetry.

Literary translation, regarded as an art, requires no theoretical justification. Viewed as a science, it appears to lack a firm theoretical foundation--though such a basis is unnecessary for the practice of translation. It is possible to establish principles to guide the translator in his task, but they are contingent upon the purpose of the translation, the relationship of the two languages in time and space, and the genre of the original. A translation is thus a compromise between opposing factors, and as such can seldom attain the level of a masterpiece. If it does, the usual cause is that a translator of genius has infused the work with his own spirit.

NOTES - CHAPTER I

[1]Horace, Ars Poetica, cited in Arrowsmith and Shattuck, eds., The Craft and Context of Translation (New York: Anchor Books, 1964), p. 353.

[2]Saint Jerome, "De optimo genere interpretandi," cited in Valéry Larbaud, Sous l'invocation de Saint Jérôme (Paris: Gallimard, 1946), p. 50.

[3]Cicero, "De optimo genere oratorum," cited in Arrowsmith and Shattuck, op. cit., p. 353.

[4]Alexander Barclay, "The Argument," The Ship of Fools, (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1874; facsimile rpt. New York: Ams Press, 1966), p. 17.

[5]Abraham Cowley, "Preface to the Pindarique Odes," Essays and other Prose Writings, ed. Alfred Gough (Oxford: Clarendon, 1915), p. 19.

[6]Etim Etkind, "La stylistique comparée, base de l'art de traduire," Babel, 13 (1967), 23-30.

[7]J.-P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet, Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais: Méthode de traduction, Bibliothèque de stylistique comparée, 1 (Paris: Didier, 1968), p. 24.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., pp. 46-48.

[10]Ibid., p. 50.

[11]Ibid., p. 51.

[12]Ibid., pp. 50-54.

[13]Gilbert Barth, Recherches sur la fréquence et la valeur des parties du discours en français, en anglais et en espangnol, Bibliothèque de stylistique comparée, 3 (Paris: Didier, 1961), p. 17.

[14]Ferdinand de Saussure, Cours de linguistique générale, p. 97, cited in Georges Mounin, Les Problèmes théoriques de la traduction (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p. 24.

[15]Leonard Bloomfield, Language (New York: Holt, 1933), p. 139.

[16]Georges Mounin, op. cit., p. 35.

[17]Ibid., p. 39.

[18]Stephen Ullmann, Précis de sémantique française, 2nd ed., Bibliotheca Romanica, Series prima, 9 (Berne: Francke, 1959), p. 300.

[19]Georges Mounin, op. cit., p. 59.

[20]A. Martinet, "Réflexions sur le problème de l'opposition verbo-nominale," Journal de Psychologie normale et pathologique, 1 (1950), 104, cited in Georges Mounin, op. cit., p. 197.

[21]Burt and Ethel Aginsky, "The Importance of Language Universals," Word, 4 (1948), 168.

[22]Theodore Savory, The Art of Translation (London: Jonathan Cape, 1957), p. 49.

[23]Ibid., pp. 20-24.

[24]Ibid., pp. 57-59.

[25]Ibid., p. 56.

[26]Félix de Grand-Combe (pseud., Félix Boillot), "Réflexions sur la traduction," French Studies, 3 (1949), 345-350); 5 (1951), 253-263.

[27]Hilaire Belloc, On Translation, The Taylorian Lecture, 1931 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), p. 41.

[28]Alexander Fraser Tytler, Essay on the Principles of Translation (1797: facsimile rpt. New York: Garland, 1970), p. 198.

[29]Theodore Savory, op. cit., p. 80.

[30]Werner Winter, "Impossibilities of Translation," in The Craft and Context of Translation, eds. Arrowsmith and Shattuck, p. 105.

[31]Robert W. Corrigan, "Translating for Actors," in ibid., p. 138.

CHAPTER II

A TRANSLATION OF CLAIRE MARTIN

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKS OF CLAIRE MARTIN

Claire Martin's first work was Avec ou sans amour, a collection of short stories that won the "Prix du Cercle du Livre de France" when it was published in 1958. Next to appear were the novels Doux-amer (1960) and Quand j'aurai payé ton visage (1962), and her two-part autobiography Dans un gant de fer (1965) and La Joue droite (1966), of which the first volume won the "Prix littéraire de la Province de Québec" as well as the Governor General's Prize for Literature. Her most recent novel, Les Morts (1970), was rewritten for the stage and performed in 1972 with the title Moi je n'étais qu'espoir.

Although the work of Claire Martin was discussed in reviews, articles, and critical anthologies before 1965, it was her autobiography that attracted general attention and became her only book to be translated into English--as In an Iron Glove by Phillip Stratford. Her depiction of domestic and religious oppression in Québécois society is controversial, and criticism is therefore as much sociological as literary. At the same time, the work possesses the qualities of a novel; Gilles Marcotte writes:

> Mais Dans un gant de fer, plus qu'un plaidoyer, est un témoignage; et, plus qu'un témoignage, une histoire. J'oserais dire un roman--sans mettre en doute la réalité des faits--, tant les prestiges de la mémoire y paraissent naturellement liés à ceux de l'imagination.1

Dans un gant de fer can merely serve to trace autobiographical influences in Claire Martin's other writings; however, viewed as a novel in its own right, it is a story of love and hate that has a direct relationship with the rest of her works, for they all explore different aspects of love.

Claire Martin deliberately chose her subject in the hope of achieving an honourable status for it in French-Canadian literature. In May 1959, speaking to the "Société des écrivains canadiens", she pointed out that the problem of love had been neglected:

> Pourquoi l'amour n'est-il jamais, quand on y regarde bien, que le problème second, le problème parent pauvre de nos romans? Il n'y a pas à dire, l'amour n'est pas aimé dans nos lettres. Il est mal portant, chétif, il a les dents courtes et se décrépit vite.2

Her own treatment of the theme has received favourable comment from many quarters. Jeannette Urbas says: "L'oeuvre de Claire Martin traite d'un seul sujet, l'amour, dont les détours subtils sont présentés sous des aspects toujours variés. La finesse de l'analyse explique en grande partie la réussite de cette oeuvre,"[3] and according to Robert Vigneault: "S'il [l'amour] a maintenant trouvé droit de cité dans la littérature canadienne-française, c'est en bonne partie grâce à l'initiative courageuse de Claire Martin . . . "[4] Critical opinion thus concedes that the author has accomplished her

goal and added "l'amour" to the list of traditional topics: "l'histoire" (eg. Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, Les Anciens Canadiens), "la forêt" (eg. Félix-Antoine Savard, Menaud maître-draveur), "la terre" (eg. Ringuet, Trente Arpents), and "la ville" (eg. Gabrielle Roy, Bonheur d'occasion). Since 1960 there has been a new preoccupation in Québécois literature that might be called "la crise d'identité politique", but Claire Martin has continued to concern herself with the question of love, which is at once more personal and more universal.

Claire Martin's other main preoccupation is the correct use of language. When asked the question: "Quels sont les éléments auxquels vous attachez le plus d'importance en composant un roman?" she replied: "La langue et le style d'abord. . . . Ce que je crois être la vérité des caractères vient ensuite. . . . Finalement, vient l'intrigue."[5] She does not claim to have attained perfection, but does insist on making the attempt:

> Je n'ai pas la prétention de ne pas faire d'erreurs. Hélas! Mais j'ai celle de toujours écrire du mieux que je le peux. A un moment où, partout dans le monde, tant d'écrivains ne semblent désireux que de déshonorer leur langue, j'ai le sentimentque mes préoccupations en valent bien d'autres.6

Her precise use of language has merited praise from various sources; J. R. Brazeau says: "Claire Martin's style is one of the more classical in the French tradition. A respect for language and a linguistic maturity best characterize her

writing,"[7] and Jack Warwick also states: "Claire Martin's claim to fame in Canadian literature rests principally on her brilliant French style."[8]

The collection Avec ou sans amour reflects the author's two major concerns, and the stories that have been chosen for translation are representative of the thematic and stylistic traits of the whole. The title itself indicates the importance of the theme of love--or lovelessness, for the emphasis is not on fulfillment, but on hypocrisy and dehumanization, jealousy and possessiveness, fantasizing and violence. Love is represented as a game of war, in which there are very few winners. The game begins on a superficial level: one must present an attractive physical appearance, particularly if one is female; therefore, make-up and clothes are extremely important. When Valérie in "La Portion congrue" wants to attract Casimir, she orders "cette crème et ce fard qu'elle voyait annoncés dans le journal . . . et dont on disait merveille"; before telling her story, Colette in "Maladresse" puts on more powder and lipstick. Make-up likewise plays a role in the untranslated "Le Visage clos", in which the dying Brigitte continues to apply her cosmetic mask until the very end, as a matter of politeness: "Laisser voir à tous ce qu'il y avait sous ce léger masque rose, cela lui eût paru bien discourtois. Et s'obliger à le porter, ce masque, même si elle s'y exténuait, ça n'était, en somme, que du savoir-vivre." As for clothes, Marie in "Les Autres" is overcome by the loss

of the blue glove that is essential for the effect of her outfit, just as the narrator of the untranslated"Suis-moi" is conscious of the impression made by her well-cut dress and belted waist. As a result of the concern with appearances, the loss of youth is considered disastrous. Renée of "Le Cercle fermé" knows that her youthful looks are only illusory and temporary, and she refuses to marry for fear of being unmasked; the narrator of "Suis-moi" is flattered to be followed by a young man because she knows that she will not be able to hide the effects of age much longer.

The stress on physical attributes leads to reification of both men and women. In "Les Autres", Luc considers his date an object, as she does herself, for he is careful not to muss her appearance by holding her too close, and she is grateful for the attention. Mariette of "Femmes", discussing the kind of husband she wants, specifies intelligence, refined manners, and good looks, but seemingly requires no moral qualities; Elmire of "Les Mains nues" is so appalled by her companion's dirty fingernails that she immediately forgets all his other good points. Since a member of the opposite sex is regarded as a commodity, few of the characters display genuine emotion. In "Femmes", even Valentine, who had a happy marriage and truly loves her fiancé, realizes the necessity of hiding her feelings from André when she is attracted to him:

> Cette contrainte que les femmes doivent s'imposer de ne pas faire le premier pas quand c'est de tourner autour d'un homme dont elles ont envie, comme le fait si simplement la fillette autour d'un garçonnet qui lui plaît, cette contrainte se faisait durement sentir dans tous ses muscles.

When the battle to win the attention of a desirable man or woman has ended, the battle to keep it has just begun. As a result, although the characters seldom display affection, they often exhibit jealousy. It is usually an attribute of women, since they are dependent on men, and it may or may not be justified by the facts. Gisèle in "Maladresse" and Suzanne in "Quand j'étais paravent", not translated, are perfectly correct in suspecting Léon and Etienne of infidelity, but they blame the wrong women. Thus jealousy is not just a matter of provocation, but one of principle, and it leads to deceitful and devious plotting. The narrator of "Les Autres" wins a temporary victory in the battle for Luc by playing on the jealousy of Marie and Francine, and Mariette's scheme to take André away from Valentine is entirely successful, although she loses him herself in the end.

Jealousy is sometimes a vicious circle, for it may be the cause as well as the result of infidelity. Léon says: "La jalousie de Gisèle est bien embêtante, c'est vrai, mais c'est aussi la chose la plus stimulante qu'on puisse imaginer. Je mesure les infidélites aux scènes de jalousie." The reason is that jealousy is a form of possessiveness, and the man who feels that a women is trying to own him often foils her by

exerting his independence. Such is the case with Luc, Léon, and the man in "Rupture", which has not been translated. The latter invariably discards women as soon as he considers himself indispensible to them; in this instance, however, his rejection is met with indifference, and he tries everything to recover his lost possession. The wish to assert one's claim to another person also manifests itself in nagging, which finally drives Léon from Gisèle to Colette, and causes Claude Dauroy in the untranslated "Xantippe" to leave his wife.

Some characters attempt to escape the harsh world of loveless exchanges between men and women by dreaming. Elmire fantasizes because she is bored, and then cannot find anyone to equal her expectations; in spite of her disastrous marriage, Valérie imagines happiness with Casimir. For both women, the dream is shattered by reality. Another form of escape is violence: Valérie's husband tries to push her downstairs, just as the narrator of "Confession", not translated, murders his wife; but the former falls and kills himself, and the latter is unable to conceal his crime. Trying to change an intolerable situation by force is therefore no more successful than building a future on wishful thinking. Almost the only ones to find happiness are Valentine, who refuses to play the game of appearances and intrigue and marries a poor artist for love, and the old couple in the untranslated "La Belle Histoire", who escape the sordid world by drowning together.

Claire Martin's exploration of love in Avec ou sans amour thus centres on negative aspects and seldom admits the possibility of future happiness.

The correct use of language, which is Claire Martin's other main preoccupation, is also an essential question in Avec ou sans amour. The stories here translated represent not only the general themes, but also the style of the whole. Since the matter of style is of paramount importance to the translator, the discussion of problems encountered in the process of translation will serve to reveal the author's particular characteristics.

NOTES - CHAPTER II

[1]Gilles Marcotte, "Le Grand Combat de Claire Martin," Les Bonnes Rencontres: Chroniques littéraires, Collection Reconnaissances (Montréal: Hurtubise, 1971), p. 165.

[2]Claire Martin, "Notre Roman, image de notre milieu," Revue Dominicaine, 20 (juillet-août, 1960), cited in Robert Vigneault, ed., "L'Auteur et son oeuvre," Avec ou sans amour, (Ottawa: Editions du Renouveau Pédagogique, 1969), p. 15.

[3]Jeannette Urbas, "Le Jeu et la guerre dans l'oeuvre de Claire Martin," Voix et images du pays VII, ed. Renald Bérubé et al. (Montréal: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1974), p. 133.

[4]Robert Vigneault, ed., "L'Auteur et son oeuvre," Avec ou sans amour, p. 15.

[5]Paul Wyczynski et al., ed., "Claire Martin," Le Roman canadien francais (Ottawa: Fides, 1964), pp. 351-352.

[6]Claire Martin in Robert Vigneault, ed., "L'Auteur et son oeuvre," Avec ou sans amour, p. 10.

[7]J. R. Brazeau, "Claire Martin," An Outline of Contemporary French-Canadian Literature (Toronto: Forum, 1972), p. 49.

[8]Jack Warwick, "Translating Brilliance," Canadian Literature, 42 (Autumn, 1969), 82-84.

WITH OR WITHOUT LOVE (FROM AVEC OU SANS AMOUR)

SHORT SHRIFT

With both hands at her throat, Valérie leaned back against the closed door. The blood was throbbing wildly in her neck, and she was trying to push it away with her powerless hands. It was only a stopgap measure.

Thirty seconds later, humiliated, she had to sit down on the wood floor. All the blood rushing to her head had left her legs hollow. But she lived alone, and this weakness would have no witnesses.

A draft from under the door was freezing her back. She had to move to the centre of the room, where she was surprised to find herself less agitated. Deep inside she began to have the feeling that she could have resisted this need for exteriorization, that she was letting herself go. Suddenly none of her turmoil remained except the lump in the throat that comes from suppressed tears. And a great reluctance to stand up.

All at once the sun came out. It didn't shine on her; it only illuminated the other rooms whose doors opened onto the hallway. But it transformed the light. And near her bent knees, Valérie could see the print of a large foot that had crushed the wool carpet.

She leaned over to get a better view and suddenly found herself so close to it that, vanquished, this time

truly submitting to the irresistible, she curled up on the floor with the imprint in the middle of the haven formed by her body. Oh! if Casimir could have seen her, how he would have laughed!

She closed her eyes and let out a moan. To hear herself, and because she was alone. She squeezed her eyelids together, trying to conjure the image of the big man with the bull-like neck and ruddy cheeks, went "Ugh!" without conviction, saw suddenly and clearly the broad, reddish, hairy hand that slapped and pinched, and got up at once.

It had happened there, near the door. When it was time to leave, he had unceremoniously clasped her around the hips. Before she could get away, he had pinched her bottom and slapped it resoundingly; then he had left, without even looking her in the face.

Without really knowing how it came about, she had found herself alone, leaning against the closed door with her hands at her throat, disappointed and delighted, enraged and soothed.

Standing there, she reeled a little, angrily ground a small coil of cigar ash into the carpet with the toe of her shoe, and worried at an unyielding fingernail with teeth that were all on edge. Then she went into her room, drew the curtains, and, planting herself in front of the full-length mirror, lifted her skirts. On the lustreless, slightly rough skin, a skin never polished by love, a broad red mark showed that

it hadn't been a dream.

It could have been one. For some time, Valérie had been dreaming a lot about Casimir. There, in that bed.

That was how she had been aroused. One evening she had gone to bed as usual, sheeted in a long flannelette nightgown, with her hair properly braided into two thick ropes that beat against her shoulders. During the night she had woken hot and moaning, embracing the disconcerting emptiness of awakening, and learning all at once the mystery of pleasure and the secret of her heart. Caught in the evil spell of night, she had sought only to recapture her dream. But Casimir had deserted her.

Valérie was thirty-eight years old, and men had always horrified her.

When she married (how long ago it was), she had taken the first man to ask her. She wanted a house with wood floors to wax, windowpanes to shine, silverware to polish, and visitors to praise it all. She wanted cupboards where she could stack the linens, the tablecloths, the sheets that she had been hemming and embroidering since she left boarding-school. She wanted a white dress with a long train spread out on the red wedding-carpet. So what if there was only a thin little man, greyish and pimply, at the other prayer-desk? So what indeed - for her purposes!

She wanted to experience the day of the bride, to be the one with the bouquet and the veil. She hadn't thought

very much about the night. She was barely twenty and practically innocent, with ideas that were far distant from reality. She hadn't foreseen that the tiny man could be tyrannical, demanding, and lascivious, that he could force his presence upon her whenever and however he wished.

Oh! the honeymoon with that fiend! The beautiful new dresses ripped, the buttons bursting, the fastenings torn off! Oh! the horror of the motions of love and particularly of the instruments of love, with their double and even triple function. Including the mouth, which is not only for eating but also for vomiting.

When, after two weeks during which the cities were different every evening but the outrages were the same, the husband and wife settled into their house, they were already old enemies. Their hatred was ripe. It would last all their lives. But the hatred did not relieve her of the nightly advances. Once day was over, she had to return to the appearance of love. And yet, she hardly refrained from crying out her disgust. He would pay no attention. Perhaps it even spurred him on. Then he would turn away and snore as loudly as if he were doing it on purpose.

Motionless, with clenched teeth, and upon her that marine odour that turned her stomach, she waited for sleep that came late and brought no peace.

The first thing in the morning, she would brood over her humiliation. Of the day before, and of the next day. Of

all the days to come, which could be--why not?--all the days of her life. It lasted ten years.

He had suddenly begun to drink. With the same frenzy, the same venom, that he brought to mating.

And alone, too.

Then, of course, he started beating her. But she was not much unhappier for that. Quite the contrary. Being tall and strong, she returned his blows with profound pleasure.

One day, he had shown up with Casimir. He had found him looking for a furnished room and had taken it into his head to lodge him at home in order to bother Valérie. There he was mistaken because, if she had looked askance at the arrival of the other man, she had afterward been almost happy to have someone to help control the drunkard when he went on a spree.

Then too, the newcomer was cheerful. His tremendous laugh shook the air, cheered and expurgated it. He was tall, big, ruddy. Next to him, the other one seemed even punier, greyer, unhealthier, more deserving of scorn and disgust. Valerie felt all this only vaguely. The comparison did not lead to desire. Not even to regrets--not yet.

And still, it had lasted almost a year. Casimir had the blue room beside theirs, and Valérie, despite the thick walls, could hear the sound of his huge shoes dropping and the springs creaking. Humble aids in the grim silence that surrounded her. That too seemed as if it must last forever.

On an evening like the rest, everything had suddenly fallen apart. As all forevers fall apart. Valérie was about to go downstairs when her husband, drunk, had loomed up behind her. He had tried to push her, but she had quickly clutched the banister. Carried forward by his own impetus, he had fallen headlong right to the bottom of the steps.

Casimir, who was getting ready to go out, had come to help carry the souse to bed, apparently dead-drunk. Or, at least, they had both acted as if they were convinced of it. But back on the main floor Casimir had taken off his coat and sat down near Valérie. They had talked about other things, as if the atmosphere in the house weren't charged with the irreparable, with the unhoped-for, with healing.

When they returned to the room at the end of the evening to undress him and put him to bed, he was cold.

There had been the inquest, the funeral, after which Casimir had left, promising to come back often.

Valérie had begun living alone, avidly, savouring her solitude like a precious commodity. It seemed she could not exhaust the sweetness of it, despite the passing years and the bodily cleansing that they brought her.

During the very first days of her widowhood, she had emptied the nuptial chamber of its furnishings, selling some and giving away others that didn't sell fast enough. The room was now perfectly bare, without so much as curtains at the windows, unrecognizable, purified. Then she had taken

up residence on the ground floor, with furniture that was new and virginal.

Casimir came to see her from time to time. Three or four times a year. He would give her some financial advice, smoke a fat cigar, and leave as he had come, without ever making a move in her direction, without ever sliding, drifting, the way a man does toward a woman.

And there, like the hearty male he was, he had immediately sensed--despite Valérie's reserve, her lowered eyes, her identical dress--that the wind had changed. He had welcomed the alteration as he welcomed such things, robustly, with a slap and a pinch.

When she had finished feasting her eyes on the mirror image of the unknown woman with flushed cheeks and shining eyes, she went to sit in the living room, in the armchair where she had just now been facing Casimir. As if he were going to come back.

Her long wait was under way.

The next day, as soon as she got up, she put on all her finery. The day before, she had ordered the face cream and powder that she had seen advertised in the newspaper for some weeks and that was supposed to work wonders. Once her face was made up, she went to sit in the same chair, waiting for what would follow, with her ear cocked and her whole body ready to spring toward the front door. He couldn't not come. Wasn't he tied to her now? Hadn't he begun to take

possession of her? Did he have any right not to come back this very day?

At lunchtime she forgot to eat. Later she didn't dare, for fear of being caught with her mouth full of food and odours and her lips unreddened. When evening came, disappointed and exhausted by the vigil of her ears, her muscles, and her whole being, she wasn't hungry.

Within two days she had got into the habit of eating next to nothing. At the end of the week she noticed, as she was dressing, that her skirt was slack at the waist.

Then she decided on a master stroke. She waited in anguish for evening to come, and called Casimir on the phone. She let it ring and ring, ten times, twenty times, before she hung up and went back to sit in her chair, beside which she always had now a whole display of sundry items: a pot of cold coffee, a carafe of water with a floating slice of lemon, a mirror, powder, lipstick, unread brochures. At the slightest rustling at the door she would snatch up the mirror, put on a little more powder here and a little more lipstick there, and drink a gulp of water to freshen her breath.

She was there every morning from nine o'clock onward. Sleeping little, she would get up at dawn, tidy up a bit, refill the carafe, the coffee-pot. Then she would dress herself as meticulously as if each day were that of the wedding she longed for.

At midnight she would remove the invariably useless makeup and go back to the bed from which uneasy sleep had driven the shadow she loved, the fond incubus of her dreams. Now she always woke up screaming from nightmares.

She waited another week. On the evening of the eighth day she got dressed to go out, pinned a note on the door--"back in half an hour"--and set off to call on Casimir. She invented a story, an urgent transaction to complete, and she was all ready with it and at the same time afraid of throwing herself at him in tears when he opened the door. She rang for a long time.

Then, on limp legs, she went downstairs to the concierge, who told her that Casimir had gone on a business trip. One of those long journeys that were a habit with him.

"A habit with him." So then he hadn't seen fit to alter any of his habits. He had left without notice.

As "before".

She returned after four or five days. Then, gradually, losing all sense of propriety, every day. And every day more drawn and emaciated, with yellowing skin and sunken eyes.

So that on the day when Casimir, back at last, stood waiting at his window with the intention of finding out who the poor woman was that, they said, always came at the same time--Casimir at first had trouble recognizing her. Appalled, he ran to the concierge. He had just enough time to warn,

"Say that I'm never coming back, that I've had all my things taken away, and to run back upstairs.

Hidden behind the curtains, he watched Valérie go away, with drooping shoulders and shuffling steps. Her only viaticum the pitiful remembrance of what love had given her--a slap and a pinch.

THE WRONG TRACK

It's common knowledge that jealous women are the ones most likely to be deceived in love. Léon wasn't just indulging in paradox when he said to me one day: "Gisèle's jealousy is really very annoying, but it's also the most stimulating thing you can imagine. I measure my infidelities according to her jealous scenes. You've no idea how busy that keeps me. I'm willing to put up with it, but not for nothing."

A charming boy, Léon, meeting life with commendable cheerfulness, acute observation, and chronic fatigue. Why didn't he drop Gisèle? Was it laziness, fear, love? I don't know. Maybe too it was the weakness that women scent and turn to their utmost advantage.

The worst part was that I was in Gisèle's confidence as well. She'd come over first thing in the morning for the umpteenth time, with a red nose, puffy eyes, and her cheeks glazed with tears--discomposure written unflatteringly all over her face--sit down beside me, and bawl on my shoulder.

Deep and silent suffering is fine: I take off my hat to it. But nothing irritates me more than the kind that vents itself in cries and imprecations. Gisèle, however, wouldn't sense my irritation. She was tuned in to Léon, and everyone else could drop dead.

When I was tired of comforting her, I'd try to reason with her. I'd say: "In that kind of game you always lose, and the other woman wins. Because jealousy always spurs her on. It's not so important when it's just a matter of little things, but sometimes the other woman takes over, and then it's more serious."

Psychology isn't my strong point. Gisèle would go away remembering only the words that could feed her obsession: the other woman, little things, take over. And Léon would phone in the afternoon to tell me off.

Why did Gisèle one day unleash her green-eyed monster on Colette? I've never really understood. At the time, there was a little blonde in Léon's life who was keeping him on a string. He was quite taken with her, and perfectly content to wait, wonder, and dance to her tune. Gisèle was on the wrong track. When you're jealous, the slightest thing is enough. A careless choice of words, a lingering but absent-minded glance, a kiss on the hand that a bulky paunch prolongs, and the gnawing worm goes to work. It won't stop until all that's left of your treasure is a little dust on your fingers.

Immediately, Gisèle once again took to conscientious watching, spying, hatred, insinuations--her usual fare. Léon was once again treated to sobbing phone calls, sorrowful looks, and venomous letters. The whole business harrassed and delighted him at the same time. Gisèle's mistake left

him a free hand with the little blonde, and he made a lot of progress.

But the mistake lasted too long, much longer than the little blonde. And added to it was a fight with Colette, accompanied by such precise accusations that she believed Léon guilty of boasting that he had obtained her favours, as they say. That was when the whole process began. The cards had been dealt, and Gisèle had picked up the low ones.

A week later, Colette rang my bell and right on the doorstep announced her engagement to Léon. I may as well tell the whole story. My first reaction was to think it served Gisèle right, I still haven't changed my mind, even though the poor girl, though admittedly lovely, has been nothing but skin and bone ever since.

So there was Colette sitting on my couch in her turn. I was literally consumed with curiosity. It made my ears burn and my fingertips tingle.

She took off her gloves, showed me her ring, put on more powder, and touched up her lipstick.

"For heaven's sake, Colette, start talking! The suspense is killing me. How did it happen?"

"It was thanks to Gisèle. You could even say she chose my husband for me. Remember the suspicions I had after the row she made? Well, the next day I was going by the hall window when I saw Léon on the sidewalk. He was walking along slowly with his head down and his hat pulled over his eyes.

Like a man who's trying to avoid attention and hoping to attract it too. Anyway, he had all the outward signs of a bashful lover. I saw red. I let him in. And not with the intention of falling into his arms, let me tell you. My hands were itching to slap him. And then, you see, we had it out. He told me how Gisèle had become jealous of me, for reasons known only to herself. Of course, I refused to believe it. Even though I know her, and the way she likes to rave, it seemed a bit thick to me. Then he showed me a whole wallet full of her letters, with my name on every line, and I had to admit he was right. I tell you, it was a good start for a collection of madmen's scribblings."

Colette paused to take a cigarette, which she lit with an unsteady hand. On her face she had that embarrassed look--half smile and half grimace--that betokens the hardest part of a confession.

"Suddenly he put his hand on the paper. I thought he wanted to take it away from me. Not trusting him, I pulled at it, and then I looked up. He had gone white. He began to talk, but in such a shaking voice that I let go of the letter. He said he'd never thought about any woman so much as about me. At first he had nothing to do with it; in fact, it was against his will. He had no choice: he heard about me all day. She spoke so badly of me that just to be contrary he set about finding good qualities in me. In short, he'd adopted Gisèle's obsession himself. Just imagine, when it

all began he was crazy about somebody else. Gisèle did such a good job that he forgot her along the way. He told me: 'Her jealousy has chosen you above all others. I yield to her judgment.'"

"Was that when you fell into his arms?"

"Yes. I stood up, not sure what to do, not really knowing what to say to a suitor I had more or less won over by proxy. Then he started kissing the back of my neck. What could I do? I bowed my head."

"In assent?"

"Yes . . . and to make it easier for him."

SPRINGTIME

The neighbours laughed when Mademoiselle Amélie went by. The women shrugged their shoulders so that their breasts, heavy from child-bearing, shook inside their flowered blouses. The children, who had heard it from their parents, shouted: "Crabby old maid, crabby old maid!"

Mademoiselle Amélie didn't even deign to bat an eyelid. Stiffly, in her black dress, she walked on.

Poor Amélie, it's true she was a spinster, but she wasn't old. Maybe thirty-five, thirty-eight--just in her prime. And not bad-looking either. But her face was always distorted with anger.

From behind, she was attractive enough to be often followed. By men who were strangers to the neighbourhood, admittedly. Pique, her daily bread, kept her thin as a grass-snake, put life in her step, and gave her remarkable posture. Compared to the gossips of the area, she reminded one of an unbroken filly in the midst of fat milk-cows.

Her pursuer, fond of nervous women, would trot along behind. When he came up to her he would stop, thunderstruck, and then hurry past. Not a single one of them ever decided to do anything but make his escape, amid the laughter of the locals.

Mademoiselle Amélie had a glare like a whiplash. Only a stranger could be unaware of its daunting effect.

The lady from the third storey, on the left, was the only one who tried to be nice. It wasn't easy. Still, she didn't lose heart. She was a very persevering and clear-thinking woman.

She was on her third husband. Therefore, Mademoiselle Amélie's situation seemed triply pathetic to her. "The poor thing," she'd sigh, "put yourself in her shoes. Have you seen how her eyes smoulder? That girl is on fire! It's all very well to say it's better to marry than to burn, but Saint Paul didn't say what to do when you're just a woman and no husbands are forthcoming."

With that she would offer up a little grimace to the misogynous saint, then smile with becoming embarrassment. For her, husbands came forward like paupers at a soup kitchen.

The lady from the third storey on the left made a point of telling her brother Charles, a recent newcomer to the neighbourhood, about how sorry she felt for Mademoiselle Amélie. Charles was fortyish, a shoe-shop owner, and a handsome man. And he was like his sister: he had a tender, compassionate heart.

On the day when he saw the old maid come into his shop with her offended expression, he couldn't resist the sudden desire to be nice to her, just to see. A compliment is easy to make, doesn't cost anything, and can't lead very

far. Since he was a shoe salesman, he looked at her feet, saw at a glance that they were slim and shapely, and told her so.

Now, Mademoiselle Amélie was extremely fond of her feet. Maybe she'd always been waiting for someone to notice them. Maybe her only reproach to the human race was that it lived in ignorance of her feet. Her look softened. She gently tilted her head to one side and laughed girlishly, like a child just out of boarding-school.

She sat down, took off her shoe, and put her foot on the cushion. Charles would have liked to move quickly; he knew he should, but he felt utterly foolish. The whiteness of her teeth, the arch of her foot, and the caress of her laugh all went straight to his heart and filled him with a sort of delighted terror.

When he had recovered from the worst of his confusion, he brought out his most beautiful shoes--shoes as soft and supple as a little girl's cheek. He was well aware that his shaking hands were a give-away, but he wasn't frightened. As long as he keeps quiet, you can't slap a man for trembling, can you? And apart from a slap, he was prepared to face anything.

The moment of truth had come. He took hold of her foot with just the right degree of warmth and slipped it into the shoe. "It fits like a glove! And notice that I didn't even ask your size." It was true. His display of

intuition gave the whole affair a very disturbing air of predestination.

He stayed there, holding the slender foot tightly in his hand. She could feel it burning through the leather. Quietly she savoured the unfamiliar bliss, meanwhile thinking that the other foot was cold too. He let her have the shoes without making any profit on them. In his eyes, she practically owned the shop already. Cost price. And he blushed as he took the money.

Mademoiselle Amélie's romance created amazement and confusion in the neighbourhood. News of it weighed heavily in gossips' conversation. People appeared at doors and windows as she passed by.

It was hard enough to digest the fact that the old maid loved and was loved, but the most astounding thing was the change in her looks. Each day endowed her with a little velvet in her glance, a little more satin in her skin, and a sort of abandon in the motion of her hips. Her ankles were fragile now and let her stumble when Charles was watching her walk beside him. She was bowing to the miracle of it all.

The grocer's wife, whose husband had married her because she was strong and could stand behind a counter for twelve straight hours without budging, and who had accepted him because the grocery business is a very serious one--the grocer's wife viewed the blossoming with an astonished eye and sighed longingly all day.

Charles' sister wasn't far from believing that they had a sort of magic spell in the family. She spoke of it at length to her third husband. To such an extent that the poor man felt a chill in his spine when she stared at him, as she often did now, with a mildly strained expression, as if she were looking through him. He had the feeling that the spell was still working and that she was watching a fourth success advance through the promising mists of the future.

When Amélie and Charles announced their engagement, the neighbours were relieved. Things were finally returning to normal! They'd had as much as they could stand, and were glad to move on to less torrid preoccupations. By the day of the wedding, they had already cooled off. The two lovers were just doing what everybody else did.

Less than a month had elasped when a bit of the old Mademoiselle Amélie started to show through. Oh, just a bit--like a slight tightening of the nostrils. A few weeks later, it was stealing over her mouth. After six months she had got back the two wrinkles between her eyebrows. Nobody realized it, because nobody was interested in her anymore. From time to time someone would eye her middle, which showed no change, and think about something else.

It was months later when two gossips, who were feeling lettuces to kill time, were struck, seeing her go past, by an impression of déja-vu. Mademoiselle Amélie had recovered

her wild mare's gait, her angry face, and her whiplash glare.

The two good women burst into laughter and loudly slapped their thighs. So that mellow mood wasn't going to last, after all?

Poor Amélie, did she even remember the springtime, the sweet ecstasy, the brief flowering?

THE OTHERS

Marie dropped in on me that day to inform me, almost in tears, that she had lost one of her beautiful glacé-kid gloves. Fabulous gloves. Unparalleled gloves.

Before leaving for Paris, she said to me: "I'm going to buy myself the most beautiful gloves I can find there, even if I have to spend a fortune on them and can hardly buy myself anything else. Except maybe the shoes and purse to match."

It was no use telling her: "That's crazy. Gloves get lost too easily. Whereas a dress, why, barring really unusual circumstances . . . ." Imagine! she's the same way about gloves as Restif de la Bretonne is about shoes. So she bought her gloves. And the purse. And the shoes. In a soft blue, slightly grey. It was marvellous! But what colour can you wear with it? She had to have the suit, a trifle paler. And since she already has eyes that are a trifle darker, all she needed was the hat, which she chose in a pink that was greyish too, a pink that's exactly right with that shade of blue. I don't know whether I'm making myself quite clear. And she came back from Paris in August instead of September. All of which goes to show that losing the glove was a multiple disaster.

Anyway, where could she have lost the precious object? Over her disconsolate face there instantly spread a veil of

happiness, like a soft and sudden cosmetic. She had gone out for a drive. With an admirer. Okay, okay, no secrets. I don't tell any. If only everyone else would do the same by me. She had phoned him as soon as she had realized the calamity. But the glove wasn't in the car. She had looked outside her door: she might have dropped it on the way in. Nothing! She must have lost it on leaving the dance. In that case, she had paid dearly for a little fun. She looked at me rapturously, smiled, and breathed a small "no". Small, but resolute. My, my!

As she was leaving, she asked: "If you're not going out this evening, why not come to my place for dinner? I'm having squabs." Dreadfully sorry, but it was my turn to go dancing. And she needn't fear for me. I have little two-dollar nylon gloves that of course I'll never lose. Things you don't care about stick to you like a lost dog on a country road.

Squabs. She's very sweet. But neither squabs nor a disconsolate friend can affect me when I'm supposed to go dancing with Luc. I'd run barefoot over broken glass to get there. So it's not practical for dancing? Nothing is practical in romances like these.

Some men offer you their life, their fortune, their eternity, and you want nothing to do with them. Luc doesn't offer anything but the passing moment. But that moment is so intense, so complete, so tender, that nothing really matters

except him. And you'd have to be an iconoclast even to imagine making him say "forever". He has the knack. Few men do. Fortunately, or women would wither on the vine, scorched to death.

When I go out with Luc, the desire to be beautiful possesses me so obstinately that a story of lost gloves, even from Paris, doesn't engross me for long. Because nothing escapes him. He never finds fault, of course, but he does praise what's good, and in such a way that I'd hate to neglect a single fingernail.

He arrived at nine o'clock, as usual. He took me in his arms with just the right amount of ardour so as not to crumple or muss any part of an effect that--as he knows very well-is difficult to create. He never crumples anything until the end of the evening. Try to explain that to the ones who weren't born knowing it.

In the car he apologized for having to stop at the train station to send a telegram. Ten minutes at the most. Ten minutes undisturbed to think about the kisses of a moment ago is not to be turned down. And first a brief glance in the mirror. These little games always leave me with somewhat faltering hands. I dropped the mirror, and it slipped down between the two seats. When I pulled it out, Marie's glove came with it.

Being alone at such a moment is truly a sign that you are cherished by fate. By the time he returned I had

swallowed my tears, my sarcasms, my insults--in short, all the stupidities that had momentarily threatened me, and had let the glove fall back where I'd found it.

One of Luc's great charms is to give you the impression that for him you're the only girl in the world. He never talks about another woman. If he has to break a date, it's to go and see his mother. If you meet him with a young lady, he implies afterward that he was with his sister. He's not the sort to bank on jealousy. He leaves that to shabby little lovers.

Had he sensed something? I think he was trying even more than usual to give me that impression of being the only one. All evening we danced, pressed close together. With just an arm encircling my waist he seems to envelop me entirely, while I spin, softly bewildered by his warmth, by the perfume of that warmth, and by everything he generously whispers in my ear. Silent lovers are only second-class. He knows that delighting the ear is the most essential of all delights and that talking of love to women will always be better, and less tiring, than proving it to them.

Just as we were parting, I was seized with the temptation to tell him about the glove. Suppose I said: "Luc, dear, here's a blue glove, and the loss of it grieves someone whom we both know well. It would be kind of you to go and take it to her tomorrow." What would be his answer? Wouldn't such a reasonable tone of voice serve my purpose? But from

then on, he'd know that I know I'm not the only one. I'd jeopardize the whole game. Let's leave well enough alone. In love, as in everything else, "striving to better, oft we mar what's well". After all, almost anything can mar love.

Marie had at last recovered her good humour. She often talked to me about her admirer. She would have liked to name him; she'd say greedily, "If you only knew who it is." You can well imagine that it was farther out of the question than ever. And she couldn't understand why I wouldn't let her recite all their little games to me. Women haven't really relished their love until they've gone over every detail. We do this and then that. Silly little fool! you haven't invented anything and I'm sure you do it very badly, your little this and your little that. But so what! I have to hear her out. Until I no longer know where to look. Marie laughed at me: "What a prude you are!" Call it prudery if you like.

Then one afternoon, when I rang her doorbell after a distressed phone call from her, she came to let me in with tear-swollen eyes and a tissue in each hand. Something lost again, Marie dear? Just let me take off my hat and light a cigarette, and then what a tale of lost and found I'd hear.

Before I have time to do any of those things, she takes the blue glove out of an envelope and waves it in front of my nose. No point in trying to fool myself; I was disappointed. For me, the lost glove was a kind of compensation.

She took a little of Luc away from me, but she had to wear her outfit with black gloves. You tell me that has nothing to do with it. Maybe it's because you're only a man.

"You didn't run into Francine when you got here? She just left, darling, and she's the one who brought this back to me. You'd never guess where she found it."

"I'm sure I wouldn't. Didn't you say something just now about a cigarette? I could certainly use one."

I look around for the pretty porcelain box that Marie brought back from her trip. It's lying in pieces on the coffee table. What's all this? Slowly--I need time so as not to make any wrong moves--I extract a not-too-mangled cigarette from the debris.

"Francine aimed for me with the compact I gave her. She missed me, but she hit the porcelain box right on target."

Marie devotes the next five minutes to waterworks. A good friend like Francine--who'd have thought it? Precisely, Marie dear, since she's such a good friend, who wouldn't have thought it? I pat her shoulder without much conviction. I, too, am a good friend. After all.

"Just imagine, she found it in Luc's car, between the two seats. You understand what that means, don't you?"

"In Luc's car? Oh yes, I see. Nothing could have been farther from my mind. And now what are you going to do?"

"I've already done it. I phoned the rotten swine (more waterworks); it's over, all over."

My heart does a little dance-step. Dear little Marie. Come and cry on my shoulder. Suddenly I feel inexhaustible powers of consolation. You were unlucky. You must always beware of first impulses. Cry, Marie, cry. But all the same, don't be too long telling me what Francine decided. Well?

"From what I understand, she treated Luc to one of her scenes . . . It couldn't have been very pretty. Those redheads have such a temper."

Is that right! Well I certainly hope they do have a temper. Dear little Marie looks at me beseechingly.

"What do you think? Suppose I wrote to him?"

"Good idea. Tell him exactly how you feel. Luc is a charming boy. I'm sure it will all work out."

It didn't work out. Just the opposite. Luc doesn't care much for clinging women. Actually, I'd have bet on it.

Now he and I go out together almost every evening. For the time being.

WOMEN

The reception was ending, and Valentine was happy. The man she liked so much seemed to like her too. All evening she had felt his glance upon her, like caressing hands, and her skin tingled under its pressure.

Like all women who are conscious of being watched by a man they like, she found it hard to act naturally and had to be careful not to talk and laugh too loudly. She also had to force herself not to spend all her time in his group, and she rather held it against him that he didn't follow her when her duties as hostess called for her to move around the room.

She was happy, and aching. The restraint that women must impose on themselves not to gravitate towards a man they want, the way a little girl does so simply when she likes a little boy, was making itself harshly felt in every muscle. She was almost relieved when he came to say goodnight.

She was smiling, her wits dulled by the effort of hiding her elation, because he was saying, "If you're free some evening this week, if you like, I'll come to take you out to dinner. We'll go dancing afterward"; just then her friend Mariette, going by them, asked casually: "May I use the telephone to call a taxi?"

Why on earth must we always try to usurp the role of destiny? It would manage things so well for us if we wouldn't

keep on pushing it, if we weren't forever speaking out of turn. Valentine said, "Just a moment, dear"; then, "André, you'll drive Mariette home, won't you?" And that was it.

The two of them got into the limousine, whose lavishly chromed front shone softly in the darkness, beckoned, like a candle-flame. At once André started to speak enthusiastically about Valentine--her grace, her charm, her nice figure. Mariette listened and was silent.

"You don't agree?"

"Of course I agree! Why, nobody can appreciate Valentine more than I do. I've known her for fifteen years. You mentioned her nice figure. I wish she could hear you, she'd be very pleased. It took so much perseverence for her to lose all that weight she gained when she was married."

"All that weight? Are you trying to pull my leg? She's as slender as a reed."

"Exactly. Just as she was before she got married. But, you know how it is. Once you've caught a husband, you sometimes forget how you did it. You let yourself go a little.

When Valentine was widowed she wasn't fat, of course, but . . . I often tell her, 'If you can't get married without putting on weight, you may as well forget it.' She's really gorgeous now, isn't she?"

"Very."

"Same thing with her hair. Didn't you know her before she had it dyed?"

"No. I thought it was naturally red. What colour was it?"

"I mean, it used to be red once. But she went quite grey near the end of her marriage. She didn't start dyeing it until she was widowed. It suits her so much better. She looks fifteen years younger than she really is. If Daniel could see her, he wouldn't recognize her."

"Did you know her husband?"

"Oh! very well indeed . . . the poor man."

"Yes, of course, dying so young."

"It's not that so much. I don't think Daniel really cared to live any longer. He looked so relieved at going that it was rather depressing, I must say."

"Really? Didn't the two of them get along?"

"Not very well. And yet, of all the men I've met, Daniel was the most endowed with every quality imaginable."

"Sometimes there are certain basic incompatibilities. After all, Valentine has very fine qualities too."

"Naturally. And anyway, the couple got on very well at first. The disagreement began when Daniel's business started to go downhill."

"Yes . . . some men are so embittered by such a misfortune that they become unbearable."

"And some women too. What do you expect, it's only human. Valentine was used to a certain amount of luxury. Like everybody else I thought that they'd married for love,

and that a setback wouldn't change anything. Hardship is even supposed to bring some couples closer together. Personally, I know if I were married and my husband lost all his money, I'd tell myself it was the perfect chance to show him how much I loved him. And it would take more than that to make my hair turn grey. But Valentine is a spoilt child. At the beginning of their troubles it was even rumoured here and there that she had--how shall I put it--tried to make up for what Daniel could no longer give her by . . . ."

"By taking a rich lover? Is that what you're trying to say?"

"Well, yes. But I've never believed it."

"In any case, it was presumably when she was still quite slim and auburn."

"Don't be nasty. I can't stand that sort of thing. She doesn't deserve it. She didn't have much determination, but it's no crime."

"And yet her present way of life must require a lot of determination. She works very hard."

"She makes a lot of money too. You have to do the one if you want the other. When she married Daniel, she thought her future was guaranteed forever. She just backed the wrong horse. Oh, I'm not worried about her. As she often says, next time she'll choose a man with more backbone."

"Does she really say that?"

"Put yourself in her shoes! You wouldn't understand.

You have money to burn. Actually, I don't understand it either. I'm foolish enough to be sentimental."

"Money doesn't interest you?"

"Me? Why, love in a cottage is enough for me! And even love all by itself."

"That's very nice. Have you found it?"

"No. Because on other points I'm very demanding."

"Which ones?"

"Intelligence, for example. I could only love a man who was extremely intelligent."

"Second?"

"Refined manners. I can't abide boors."

"Third?"

"Good looks. Don't laugh, it's a weakness of mine."

"Yes . . . Your demands would make the most vain of suitors tremble with fear."

"You can talk--you have it all."

"Does that mean I could apply?"

"Why, what are you thinking of? I haven't forgotten Valentine's existence, and I assure you it's enough to keep such an idea out of the question. Friendship is a thing I honour more than anything else in the world."

"How handsome of you! And suppose I told you that Valentine means nothing to me. Nothing at all, I swear it. If you're free some evening this week, if you like, I'll come to take you out to dinner. We'll go dancing afterward."

Six months later, on his way to lunch, André found himself face to face with Valentine. He invited her to join him.

"You look very happy, Valentine."

"I should hope so. You see, I'm getting married."

"Ah! Do I know him?"

"Oh no! He's not a businessman. He's an artist."

"A well-known one, then?"

"Well-known? No. He's just a penniless artist, extremely talented but not famous."

"Really!"

"What is it? You seem very surprised."

"I am, a little. You'll think I'm a cad, but . . . what do you live on when you marry an unknown artist?"

"On whatever comes along. And then I'll keep on working. It doesn't make the slightest difference to me. No, I never eat bread, thank you."

"Afraid of putting on weight?"

"Like the plague. Just imagine, my first husband had the tastes of an Arab. I was never plump enough for him. It was useless to protest. Afterwards I had all the trouble in the world getting back to the way I used to be."

"Didn't you want to stay the way he loved you?"

"It would have seemed rather unhealthy to me. As they say, life is for the living."

"You must have held it against him?"

"Against Daniel? The poor darling, I'd have done anything for him."

"Did you get along well?"

"I'd even say the two of us were scandalously in love with each other. Even though I'm marrying again, I'll always have warm memories of him. I know I made him happy. I don't have any regrets."

"Are you sure you made him happy? It's so hard to know, it seems to me."

"Valentine dug around in her purse and took out a card that she handed to André. It was the sort of card you get at all florist shops. Daniel had written on it: "You have made me the happiest of men."

"It's the card that came with the last flowers he gave me. I never part with it. It may sound like a rather high-flown declaration, but remember that he was going to die, and he knew it. What a wonderful man!"

"You loved him that much?"

"Yes! When I learned he was fatally ill, my hair went completely grey in a few months. He didn't want me to dye it because it had turned grey for him. He'd grown a little childish, like many sick people."

"There, now you're sad. Tell me, didn't you hold it against me for never phoning you?"

"A little, yes. I can tell you now that there was a time when I almost started to love you. I was only waiting

for a bit of encouragement. It never came. I was upset, I admit. But since you preferred Mariette . . . . By the way, how are things with you two? I never see her anymore. When are you and she going to follow my example?"

"Mariette? Well now! I think it's over with Mariette!"

"That's something new. Since when?"

"Why, since today. You see, she only likes men who are extremely intelligent."

FULL CIRCLE

I entered to find Renée sitting on the carpet with her back against the sofa, her hands clasped behind her neck, and her face pale with joy and folly.

She looked at me wordlessly, her eyes half-shut and her lips parted over moistly glistening teeth.

"What kind of behaviour is this? Are you masquerading as a happy woman?"

"I am."

Then she fell back into her trance, stretching her pampered, smooth, silky arms. Her arms indeed! Everything about my sister is pampered, smooth, and silky. At forty-five, she contrives to look thirty. She spends half her life at it, but she says it prevents the other half from getting too simple, and the end of complications is the beginning of death.

As soon as the first grey threads appeared, she had her hair dyed light brown--the precious pale brown of expensive fur. And it shines, it shimmers, it gleams. She brushes it every day until her arms drop from exhaustion.

I watch her. . . . Even in her present state of ecstasy, you can see she's a woman who worries about the line of her chin, the slope of her shoulders. All the muscles in her body are tamed, trained, obedient. And she finds

time to sing, paint, be involved in the theatre, and make her own clothes. It's hard, living with Renée. You feel breathless all the time.

She was still sitting, with rapture on her face. I hadn't seen her like that since the beginning of her big affair with Robert. And even then, I don't think it went to such an extreme. That dratted Renée is a lucky woman. Rich, and a widow into the bargain. Of course it's a terrible thing to lose a husband you love. But Renée is the widow of an elderly gentleman the family pushed into her arms when she wasn't yet twenty. She's free without being left on the shelf; she wears the halo of misfortune, which doesn't look bad with a smooth forehead; she's in no danger of being either beaten or deceived.

"I can't even remember what the poor man looked like," she often said. "If he took it into his head to appear now, I wouldn't recognize him. But I haven't forgotten a wonderful black suit I got when I first went into mourning and brightened up later with a misty pink scarf. I'm a born widow, the way some are born blondes."

She has since had a few passions that she describes as devastating. Passions that were deserved and reciprocated, too--which is no small matter. Drat Renée!

"And who's the cause of the masquerade?"

"You're going to laugh. It's the first man I ever loved, who has just fallen into my arms. Plop!"

"Thibeault?"

"What do you mean, Thibeault?" Are you joking, or trying to make fun of me? Why, he must be really old by now. Go on, it was a long time before that."

She stood up, shaking an imaginary Thibeault out of her skirts, and went to her room.

"It's time for my beauty angle. Are you coming?"

"Today too? Isn't this your lucky day?"

"Today more than ever. I'm seeing him again tomorrow."

The beauty angle consists of lying with her head and shoulders on the floor, her hips on the bed, and her feet even higher on a mountain of stacked pillows. Meanwhile she massages her face with nourishing cream. It lasts half an hour. She gets up with a relaxed, refreshed face--the rosy face of a ravished adolescent.

Occasionally I let myself be convinced and do the angle with her. These are always our best times for confidences. We're close together, but can't see each other. If it weren't for the angle, there are a lot of things we'd never have dared to tell.

"Pass the face cream. So who was your first love then?"

"Gérard."

"How's that, Gérard? But you've only known him for fifteen years."

"I beg your pardon! He's only known me for fifteen years. You're forgetting he's an actor, which changes

everything."

"You mean you were in love with an actor, just like a little girl?"

"So? Imagine, I was fifteen."

"That's some story. . . . Are you getting up now?"

It was the very first time I had seen Renée interrupt the angle. Usually she doesn't even answer the telephone. She opened a drawer, took out a kind of album, and brought it to me. It was a scrapbook, one of those vaults of human vanity where actors, writers, and sportsmen preserve the slightest word written about them.

On the first page was a theatre program with Gérard's name at the bottom of the list. It was thirty years old.

"I'd gone with Aunt Berthe. He was seventeen."

"He must have had a good time with his harem-boy look at that age."

"As you say. Look at this photo from the same year."

Heavens! If thine eye offend thee! Just as I imagine the young lad with whom Scheherezade must have spent the afternoon while her husband caught up on lost sleep.

The whole scrapbook was full of photos of Gérard, articles about Gérard, and, near the end, letters from Gérard. Renée put the album down on the bed and resumed the angle.

"What I don't understand is why, when you've known him for fifteen years, you didn't manage to get him until today."

"Manage to get him? That's no way to talk. Come, have you ever seen me make advances to a man?"

She mused a little as she massaged her throat. The perfidious throat that gets stringy if it's thin and sags into double chins if it isn't. Keeping your throat just right is the work of a lifetime, and all the same you finally lose the contest, sooner or later.

"Apparently they can do plastic surgery on you now by pulling the skin of your throat toward the back of your neck. They cut off the extra and sew it up. Like this. Far superior to what Madame Leblond had done. But you must always feel sort of strangled, sort of choked. It must be like having a constant lump in your throat. What with that and hot flashes from the menopause to boot, you must wonder what's going on. Tell me, have you ever seen me make advances to a man?"

"No, but I have seen you respond to certain advances. Very smooth. You're never at a loss for words."

"I remember one evening when he put his hand on my shoulder and I had cramps in my neck from trying not to rest my cheek on it. Another time, I was giving him his cues at a play reading. The actress wasn't there. Near the end there was a whole scene of "I love you, do you love me, I am yours." I didn't let myself look up even once. One day he invited me to dinner. There was a blizzard. . . ."

And so on like that for a quarter of an hour, while continuing to massage her face. It all went to show that my sister Renée is, above all, extremely patient. I can't see myself waiting thirty years for any gentleman to return my love. (I don't think you often hear it put like that nowadays). It would have died in the meantime.

"But say, when you met him, it must have bowled you over. I'd have liked to see your face."

"It wasn't my face so much as my legs. I've never so well understood the expression about knees turning to jelly. And how silly I was! I haven't talked so much nonsense in my whole life as in those two short hours. Not surprising that he took fifteen years to get over it."

"So then? Today?"

"I was at the theatre about the costumes. He had me come into the little office. We talked for a minute, and as I was about to leave he took me in his arms and kissed me.

"He did?"

"If you only knew the half of it. You'd see."

"You told him?"

"As soon as I could breathe. I couldn't see any more sense in keeping quiet. I couldn't see sense, period. I took full advantage of it. I've already told you how I babbled."

"What did he have to say for himself?"

"Would you believe it?--He's shy."

"And . . . what about the others, the ones you loved since you were fifteen. I don't quite understand."

"My dear girl, all the same, I'm not crazy. Can you see me suffering for thirty years from unrequited love, as they say? No! The truth is that I've always been ready to love him, at the first little sign. Understand?"

I understand, but I can't resist picturing some droll situations. For example, if the little sign had come "in Robert's time". It reminds me that she does have a gentleman friend at the moment.

"Renée! What about poor Vincent?"

She stretched her arm out over me, closed her fingers, and opened them wide, as if to drop something. With the admirable composure that women display at such times.

The half-hour was past. She stood up and began her exercises. Sighing, I undertook to do the same. It's better than hearing remarks about every one of my bulges. Ten minutes. You have to pay for youth. She uses the next ten minutes to examine her flesh suspiciously, to put her hands around her waist, and to look at her stomach from the side and her upper arms.

Next, she has to take off the nourishing cream. From behind her tissue, Renée said:

"This is the last love of my life, you understand. Now I've come full circle."

"All the same, what a lot of wasted time."

"Silly! A romance that's just beginning is so wonderful. It would have been over a long time ago."

"And what are you going to do? Marry him?"

She glared at me. I'll certainly never understand anything at all.

"No, why, you can't be serious. Marry my great man and see him every morning with tousled hair, bags under his eyes, and a stubbly beard?"

Suddenly her eyes filled with tears and swept over the array of cosmetic weapons on the night table.

"Do you understand?"

I nodded gently, while she turned away her face. Her face pitifully aware of so little time left to be young.

KID GLOVES

She was bored. There's nothing unusual in that. There are such a lot of little women who are bored, so bored, and who spend their time sighing and waiting. Waiting for heaven knows what. But they don't often get it. And what they do get, they don't always want. They dream. And then, the more they wait, the more they fuss over their dream. They buff and polish it. Until it is so sublime, so captivating, so glamourous, that they can't get rid of it. They start all over again. When they die, they must be weighed down by stillborn dreams.

When boredom had first taken hold of her and she had begun waiting, Elmire's dream was fairly simple. He had an honest, run-of-the-mill face, an ordinary job that left him with some free time, and a car. He said nice things easily: "That's a pretty dress. . . . You have beautiful eyes. . . . Do you want to come to lunch with me in the country?"

Then instead she would imagine their lunch together, or the dress, or else she'd go and make up her eyes. As you can see, it wasn't the sort of dream that makes a woman wither prematurely. It was just something to fill the emptiness. It was still only in its infancy.

But then, one day, Elmire found a letter on the bus. A passionate letter, full of "my sweet love, my reason for

living, your satin skin, never, always". Definitely the kind of letter you seldom receive in a lifetime. And that other woman, the fool, the one to whom it had been written--she had lost it. Really, some women! . . .

When she got home, she had hidden it in the big saucepan that she used only at New Year's when all the relatives came to dinner. As soon as she was alone she would read it over and over, until it was drained of excitement. She knew she was being silly, but she didn't want to destroy it. At the idea that someone might find it, she shivered with an exquisite fear, a mixture of vanity, dread, and the desire to shock and hurt. It was as if she were hiding something unspeakable and dangerous. Curare or nitroglycerine.

And them, of course, she had started looking at men. Oh, she had always done it, but now she was in earnest. She looked at them wide-eyed with hope, seeking the one who would bear the mark of love on his forehead. Most of them seemed more likely to bear the mark of betrayal. They weren't always the ones who were being deceived. It doesn't matter whether you're being deceived or not; it's how you look that counts. Almost all of them looked as if they were.

For a woman who is waiting, it's distressing to see how few eligible prospects there are. Perhaps two out of a hundred. And of those two, one becomes unacceptable as

soon as he opens his mouth. Because of what he says, or because of his offensive breath. Sometimes both. Obviously, it would be very stupid of them to go to a lot of trouble for women who lose their love-letters on the bus.

One March day, as she was leaving the restaurant with her friend Berthe, a dark, handsome man had stopped his car beside them and invited them to get in. He was Berthe's cousin. He had some time to kill and took them for a spin.

Now there was an eligible man! And that's an understatement. He had enormously dark eyes, and a little mustache over a mouth that was--oh! so red, so fleshy. Ten out of ten for the mouth. And then, he was well-dressed, in fine woollens and soft leather gloves. The sort of man you could wish them all to be: witty, gay, brilliant, caustic. A man who will at least have made you laugh a lot, even if some day he makes you cry.

Elmire wished that the ride would never end, that Berthe weren't there, that his hand, which she imagined to be hot inside the kid leather, would come to rest on hers. But Berthe was still there, the drive was almost over, and the gloved hand remained on the steering wheel until the goodbyes, until the handshake that was pressing and heavy with promise.

He phoned the next day and the day after as well. Every day! He said such sweet things, in such a touching voice, such meaningful tones, that Elmire forgot to reread

the letter. Naturally, he wanted to take her to lunch in the country. He knew an inn, nestling among paths and groves, that the beginning of April would awaken like a blossoming romance. He wanted it so much, and she too for that matter, that she'd had to accept.

She chose her dress carefully, made her eyes mysterious with shadow and mascara, hesitated a long time between a girlish perfume and a vampish one. What was he expecting, what would he require her to be, this man who was ready to discover in her the image he desired? Lavender woman or musk woman?

She was laying her snares, but all the while she was thinking of him. Of him, and the moment when he in turn would speak the words of the letter: "My love, my reason for living, always." Her heart was beating fast and hard in her breast. It couldn't stand waiting any longer. It skipped madly, and time seemed to pass even more slowly.

She had told him: "I'll be walking along the main road. You'll only have to pick me up." She was there much too early. It was cold and rainy. Her nose was turning blue. At last he arrived, with his big car, his fine woollens his soft gloves, his mustache, and his full-lipped mouth. A mouth that seemed pregnant with infinite pleasures.

She felt a little giddy, and it made her breathless. She babbled, she laughed, she had no idea of what she was saying. What a beautiful day! she thought, while a trace of

rain trickled between her shoulder-blades.

It was raining so hard now that when they arrived at the inn they couldn't get out right away. The rain tactfully made a curtain around them. She leaned her head on the desired shoulder, stammering "hello, hello". It was no use; she couldn't find anything else to say.

When the rain grew lighter, they ran through the puddles and went into the inn. She was thirsty, and as they passed between the tables, after leaving their coats in the checkroom, she looked longingly at what people were drinking.

They sat down, and he took her hands between his bare ones. Elmire drew them up beneath her chin, then pushed them back to arm's length and hung onto them with all her weight, like a trapeze artist entrusting his fate to two outstretched hands. But suddenly it was as if she were left in mid-air. All her burning fever froze instantly. At each fingertip, there was a broad nail rimmed with black.

She looked away slowly, said, "I'm going to powder my nose," and stood up.

Then she took her coat from the checkroom and left in the rain. Still thirsty.

CHAPTER III

TRANSLATING CLAIRE MARTIN

Literary translation of Avec ou sans amour involves several of the problems discussed in the first chapter, but the relationship of the source and target languages in time and space creates only minor difficulties. Since the collection dates from 1958, no concession has to be made to changing times; even so, the time lapse is evident in some of the descriptions of dress and in some of the assumptions about society. Such details as the hat worn for an afternoon visit in "Les Autres" and the seamed stockings worn in "Suis-moi" place the stories in the recent past; in "Les Mains nues" and "Les Autres", the plot revolves around gloves, which are now only worn for practical reasons. More important, however, is the depiction of society. The female characters have very little to do but think about men because, whether single, married, or widowed, they have no occupation in the outside world. The sole exceptions are Valentine, who is considered brave for going to work at an unidentified job, and the narrator of "Le Talent", who is apparently a radio actress. The relatively active Renée is viewed as a marvel because she manages to paint, sing, act, and sew while preserving her youthful appearance. At the same time, the women seem to have nothing to do in the domestic

world either. Housecleaning is seldom mentioned, and cooking is recalled only by the fact that Marie has squabs for dinner, Valerie practically stops eating, and Elmire hides her letter in a saucepan. The milieu is the comfortable middle class in the era before women's liberation, and as a result the stories are rather dated without being old enough to qualify as historical documents. It is not the business of the translator to try to update them, however, because Claire Martin's variations on the theme of love are largely determined by the circumstances of the time.

The factor of place plays an even smaller role in the translation of Avec ou sans amour than the element of time, since the author, translator, and readers are Canadians. Any problems which might arise because of differences between French and English society do not occur in the stories of Claire Martin, whose consciousness is not regional but universal. There is nothing to indicate the particular geographical or political setting within Canada, and there are only a few details that identify it as North American. The most frequent location is the city, usually restricted to one neighbourhood or one house, but the city is never named. Even when the narrator of "Confession" travels across the country from one end to the other, he leaves his points of departure and arrival unidentified:

> Et puis, je commencai ce long voyage où je sillonnai presque tout le pays. Tous les soirs une nouvelle ville toujours plus loin, et tous les soirs la chambre vide, la bouteille d'alcool et la peur. . . . Quand je fus rendu à l'autre bout du pays, je louai un petit appartement et m'installai.

The anonymity of the setting is matched by the absence of regional speech, dress, customs, and attitudes. The fact that the scene is set in Canada, or at least in North America, is illustrated only by small details such as those in "Les Autres": Marie bought her gloves on a trip to Paris, from which she had to return a month early, and Léon stops at the train station (not at the post office) in order to send a telegram. The frequent use of the telephone--in "La Portion congrue". "Les Autres", "Les Mains nues", and other stories not translated--is also an American and particularly a Canadian characteristic. Despite the intentional lack of specifically regional attributes, it is fairly clear to the reader that the characters inhabit the province of Québec, if only because of the provenance of the author and of the publication. Sometimes, two, there are hints in the stories themselves; in "La Portion congrue", Roman Catholicism is taken for granted, for Valérie went to a convent school and was married in a church with a red carpet and prayer-stools for the bridal couple. The fact that the collection retains a certain local atmosphere justifies leaving the names of the characters in French rather than translating them into English.

Although the translation of Avec ou sans amour poses only minor problems with respect to historical or national differences, it naturally involves difficulties of genre and style. Claire Martin's personal definition of the novel also applies to her short stories: "Pour moi, un roman c'est une histoire dont les personnages ne sont plus capables de garder le secret. De là vient que mes romans sont écrits à la première personne."[1] In fact fourteen of the twenty-seven stories in the collection are written in the first person; sometimes the narrator is the centre of attention, and sometimes he is an onlooker. Of the stories here translated, three have personal narrators, all of whom receive the confidences of others. In "Les Autres", Marie tells her troubles to the narrator, who then profits from them; she plays an active as well as a passive role. The narrator in "Le Cercle fermé" is Renée's sister and thus a natural confidante and observor. Finally, the narrator of "Maladresse" has little to do with the action of the story but hears of developments from both Gisèle and Colette. The first-person technique has several variations: narration of past events with or without conversation, dialogue in the present about the past, interior monologue, and letters. The three stories cited above consist of narration with conversation, which is the method most frequently employed. "Autres Temps" is a dialogue between two speakers; "La Belle Histoire" is a monologue with an implied listener; and

"Suis-moi" is an interior monologue revealing reactions to happenings in progress. The letters, "Lettre à Werther" and "C'est raté", are of course addressed to a particular recipient by a first-person writer. In the case of narration with conversation, the narrator directs his story to the reader, but in the other instances, the reader is almost an eavesdropper or a voyeur.

The remaining thirteen stories have a third-person narrator of varying degrees of omniscience. "Le Visage clos" consists almost entirely of Brigitte's thoughts and perceptions as she lies on her deathbed, and the narration ceases with her death:

> Quand ils quittèrent la chambre, une sorte d'ouate floconneuse avait déjà commencé à l'isoler de tout. Elle joignit les mains et se laissa doucement investir par ce brouillard qui l'asphyxiait miséricordieusement.

In the other stories, intrusions upon the thoughts and emotions of the characters alternate with accounts of the external action. The narrator usually probes only one consciousness in each case, and reveals it either in his own words or in those of the character himself. In "Printemps", although Mademoiselle Amélie is the central character, it is Charles whose feelings are described and whose thoughts are reported: "Charles aurait voulu se précipiter, il savait bien qu'il aurait dû le faire, mais il se sentait tout nigaud. . . . S'il se tait, on ne peut pas gifler un homme parce qu'il tremble. Pas vrai?" "Les Mains nues" also uses both

techniques: "Elle s'ennuyait. . . . Il y a des femmes, ma parole!" "La Portion congrue", too, employs both description and indirect quotation: "Elle voulait vivre la journée de la mariée. . . . Ah! le voyage de noces avec cet acharné!" On the other hand, "Femmes" gives only the narrator's interpretation of Valentine's emotions: "La réception s'achevait et Valentine était heureuse. Cet homme, qui lui plaisait tellement, elle croyait bien lui plaire aussi." In third-person narration, as in first-person, conversation may or may not play a role. Thus any of three factors--mental state of the character, observable actions, and reported speech--may be emphasized or omitted.

Whatever the similarity of narrative technique between the novel and the short story, the latter requires a radically different approach to character and plot. Given the short period of time covered by a short story, the characters can undergo no development but a sudden one, which must be justified by the circumstances. In the stories translated, Valérie, Elmire, and particularly Mademoiselle Amélie experience a change, but soon revert to their former situation. Besides disallowing gradual character development, the short story precludes lengthy physical and moral descriptions. Despite the emphasis that Claire Martin places on dress and make-up, the reader knows little about the appearance of her characters. He learns that Valérie and Gisèle turn to skin and bone, that Marie has blue eyes, that Valentine's

hair is dyed red and Renée's brown, and that Mademoiselle Amélie has a distinctive walk and facial expression; however, such details are rare, and occur only when needed to illustrate a specific point. The moral attributes of the personages emerge from their thoughts, actions, and conversations, not from any authorial commentary.

The form of the short story, in imposing a restriction on its possible time span, curtails complication of the action as well as development of the characters. Whereas a novel consists of a series of incidents arranged in some sort of pattern--whether chronological, thematic, or otherwise--the plot of a short story almost invariably revolves around a central incident. This concentration, however, does not entail simplicity; in Avec ou sans amour, the structure of each story is an intricate web of detail, with each strand connected to what precedes and what follows. Even the title is an integral element, for it often relates directly or indirectly to something in the story, has more than one possible interpretation, and thus summarizes the plot while pointing to the theme. "Printemps", for example, is a word that appears in the conclusion of the story--"Pauvre Amélie, s'en souvenait-elle, seulement, de ce printemps, de ce doux délire, de cette courte floraison?"--and refers to Amélie's blossoming, which is as brief as spring. "Le Cercle fermé" is a variation on an expression used by Renée--"Maintenant le cercle est refermé"--but it implies more than she intended,

for the circle is a vicious one that prevents her from forgetting appearances and marrying Gérard. "La Portion congrue" is an ecclesiastical term that ties in with the word "viatique" at the end of the story; they both refer to Valérie's meagre portion of love, the slap and the pinch that inspire her actions. At the close of "Les Mains nues", Elmire's companion removes his gloves and reveals his black fingernails; hence the title has both a literal and a figurative meaning--the unmasking that forces Elmire to face reality. The titles "Maladresse", "Les Autres", and "Femmes", though not related to specific phrases or incidents, characterize both the particular action and the general theme of each story. Such titles are generally less difficult to translate than those with multiple references and implications, all of which must be considered.

The intricate structure of the stories themselves is less dependent on the relationship of incidents than on the logical progression of actions, speeches, and ideas, since the actual incidents are few. Two techniques which frequently contribute to logical composition are the flashback and the surprise ending. Both are almost necessitated by the short story form: the first, because only a short period of time is represented, and any background history must be summarized; the second, because the point of the story has to be made clearly and briefly. Claire Martin, however, does not rely on the surprise ending as such; it is the culmination of all

that precedes, even when it involves a reversal of circumstances.

A few examples will suffice to illustrate the deliberate intricacy of the stories in Avec ou sans amour. At the beginning of "La Portion congrue", Valérie is so overwrought that she falls to the floor, but she has the feeling that she could have resisted the impulse to do so: ". . . elle aurait pu résister à ce besoin d'extériorisation. . . ." Later, however, she can't help curling up around Casimir's footprint: ". . . obéissant vraiment, cette fois, à l'irréstible, elle s'eténdit. . . ." The story flashes back to the incident with Casimir and to her marriage, and then describes Valérie's increasing desperation and its physical and moral effects: she becomes thinner and more haggard; she begins by waiting anxiously for Casimir, then phones him, then goes to his house more and more often. The last words are "Une grande claque sonore et un pinçon", and it was these that initiated Valerie's acts.

The narrator of "Maladresse" provides a link between the points of view of Léon, Gisèle, and Colette: the first two reveal the nature of their relationship before Gisèle's fatal mistake, and Colette relates what happens afterward. The narrator emphasizes Gisèle's blunder through repetition: "Erreur d'aiguillage. . . . L'erreur de Gisèle lui laissait ses coudées franches. . . . Seulement, l'erreur dura trop longtemps." The original mistake of directing her jealousy

at Colette is aggravated when she acts upon her suspicions, so that Colette inevitably wins Léon. The ending is the logical outcome of Léon's first statement: "Je mesure les infidélites aux scènes de jalousie," for Gisèle became impossibly jealous and Léon therefore was completely unfaithful.

"Printemps" too employs a system of repeated references as part of its structure. In the first paragraph, the children call Mademoiselle Amélie a crabby old maid, and in the third, the narrator takes up each part of the expression: "Pauvre Amélie, c'est vrai qu'elle était célibataire. Mais elle n'était pas vieille. . . . Mais le visage toujours ravagé par le courroux." After the initial description of the situation, the action begins. Amélie undergoes a gradual transformation, starting when Charles compliments her: "Son regard s'amollit. Elle inclina doucement la tête sur l'épaule et éclata de rire, fraîchement . . .," and continuing daily: "Chaque jour la gratifiait d'un peu de velouté du regard, d'un peu plus de satiné de la peau, d'une sorte d'abdication dans le roulement des hanches." The narrator recounts the reactions of the grocer's wife and of Charles' sister, and then of the neighbours in general when Charles and Amélie finally get married. The marriage sets off Amélie's reverse transformation, which leaves her in her former state. The neighbours, who act as witnesses throughout the story, appear at both beginning and end to comment on Amélie's situation.

"Les Autres" gives the impression of starting in medias res with the words "Ce jour-là Marie s'est arretée chez moi. . .," and then flashes back to the history of Marie's gloves. Her plan to buy the most beautiful gloves in Paris even if she couldn't buy anything else, except maybe shoes and purse, was completed to the letter: she bought gloves, shoes, purse, suit, and hat, and couldn't afford to stay in Paris as long as she had intended. The story returns to the present only to flash back to the evening when she lost her glove. After Marie's departure, there follows a description of Luc's character, particularly with regard to women, and the narrator's discovery of Marie's lost glove in Luc's car. The story ends as it began, with Marie telling her woes to the narrator. The emotional reaction of the former at the revelation of Luc's infidelity contrasts with the calculating reaction of the latter, who takes advantage of the situation to keep Luc for herself.

Like the other stories, "Femmes" too employs an almost circular structure. Valentine is first described as happy, because she senses that André likes her, and then as happy and aching, because she can't let her own liking show. The apparently unimportant fact that her wits are dulled by the strain actually has great significance, for she is unable to see that Mariette has designs upon André when she asks about calling a taxi. The result is that Mariette deliberately destroys André's good impression of Valentine's appearance and

character, while posing as a good friend, and then manages to attract André herself through adroit falsehood and flattery. Six months later, the reverse process takes place: André, in conversation with Valentine, discovers that Mariette has misled him on every point, and decides to break off his relationship with her. Meanwhile, however, Valentine has found someone else, so that the sly Mariette and gullible André are left with no one.

"Le Cercle fermé" begins with a description of Renée's emotional state, which is emphasized through several references: "le visage pâle de bonheur et de déraison", "son accès", "cette espèce d'état second où elle est en ce moment", "sa petite extase sur le visage". There follows a description of Renée's appearance and character: she works hard to remain beautiful. The central part of the story consists of two flashbacks--one to her meetings with Gérard thirty and fifteen years previously, and the other to her encounter with him earlier that day. By the end, her happiness has fled, for she has realized the futility of her attempts to stay young.

The opening paragraph of "Les Mains nues" is prophetic in remarking that bored women either don't get what they want or get what they don't want, and indulge in dreams of ever-increasing impossibility. Elmire's dream began as an ordinary man, but the discovery of the letter on the bus makes her wish for a great love, to which almost none of the

men she sees seems equal. Then one day she meets Berthe's cousin, who appears to be all she could wish. He fulfills the first part of the dream by complimenting her and taking her to lunch in the country, and she expects him to fulfill the second part by saying the words in the letter, but he disappoints her as others have disillusioned her before--because his fingernails are dirty. The apparently unimportant detail that she was thirsty as they entered the restaurant gains significance with the closing words: ". . . elle est partie sous la pluie. Avec sa soif." Her literal thirst becomes figurative, for her dream has failed her once again.

The intricate structure of the stories in Avec ou sans amour is both a help and a hindrance to the translator. It can prevent mistranslations, because the logical progression of thought shows what direction is to be taken; anything that appears inconsistent is probably a mistake. On the other hand, it is sometimes difficult to find an expression in English that has not only the same meaning, but the same function in its context, as an expression in French. An example from "Printemps" is "vieille fille enragée", translated as "crabby old maid"; "enragée" relates better than "crabby" to the description of Amélie's face as "ravagé par le courroux". A thorough understanding of plot development is therefore necessary for a successful translation.

Since the relationship between the original and the translation in time and space is close, and since the narrative

structure remains the same in both, the greatest problems in translating Avec ou sans amour are linguistic ones. Such problems may be of two orders: those that occur in translation from French to English, and those in the work and particular stories themselves. The first kind in turn may be on the level of morphology, semantics, or syntax. Three examples of the former that recur in Avec ou sans amour are the absence of the present participle construction with "en" in English, and the absence of the progressive tense in French, as well as the lack of correspondence between English and French past tenses of the verb. The use of the "en" construction permits an economy in French that is lost in translation, as in the sentence: "En partant, elle me demanda . . .," which becomes: "As she was leaving, she asked. . . ." On the other hand, the English progressive tense indicates continuity or simultaneity where it is only understood in French: "Je marcherai sur la grande avenue./I'll be walking along the main road." The difficulty of relating the English present perfect, past, past progressive, and pluperfect to the French passé composé, passé défini, imparfait, and plus-que-parfait is commonly known. Another problem is the use of nouns and pronouns. In "Les Autres" the pronoun "on" and the impersonal verb together create a difficulty in identifying the antecedent: ". . . tu le fais bien mal, ton petit ceci et ton petit cela. Mais qu'importe! Il faut aller jusqu'au bout. Jusqu'au moment où on ne sait plus où regarder.

Marie se moquait de moi. . . ." Similarly, the use of the adjectival noun with the impersonal verb in "Maladresse" causes some confusion: "Le gagnant, c'est l'autre. . . . Quand il ne s'agit que de petites fredaines, ça n'est pas tellement important. Mais il arrive que l'autre prenne toute la place. . . ." In such cases of ambiguity the translator is usually compelled to specify the antecedent.

One type of semantic difficulty is caused by the infamous "faux amis": cognates are not necessarily synonyms; their meanings may correspond, intersect, or be distinct from each other. The translator must be aware of the respective meanings of any two cognates, so that he knows when to keep the original and when to find a substitute. In the case that most frequently arises--that of intersection--the translator depends on the context to guide his choice. The first page of "La Portion congrue", for example, contains a whole series of cognates--"humiliée, faiblesse, pièce, sentiment, résister, extériorisation, trouble, brusquement, embarras, refusées, illuminer, empreinte "--which have been translated respectively as: "humiliated, weakness, room, feeling, resist, exteriorization, turmoil, suddenly, lump, suppressed, illuminate, print". The French and English words overlap to varying degrees, and the selections made here may or may not conform to those most frequently employed, because it is the context that determines the exact denotation.

A further problem is that of connotation. Valentine describes her husband-to-be as "un pauvre diable de peintre", and the equivalent English expression is "a poor devil of an artist". Yet the latter implies a certain degree of pity, condescension, or even scorn, that is surely absent in the original, for Valentine loves him. The translation thus becomes "a penniless artist", in order to avoid misleading connotations. There are other variations of the problem, the solutions of which depend on the context and on the judgment of the translator. In some cases, it may be preferable to keep a direct translation at the risk of losing accrued implications; in others, to find an equivalent with the same connotations.

Syntactical difficulties in French-English translation are minor, but they do occur. There are several differences in word order, and whereas some are obvious and have an obvious resolution ("Des gants fabuleux"/"Fabulous gloves"; "Il m'a prise dans ses bras"/"He took me in his arms"), others are more subtle. Adverbs have a fixed position in French and an unfixed one in English sentences, and the translator maintains, transfers, or transposes them according to common usage as well as according to context. "Aussitôt, Gisèle s'adonna consciencieusement, une fois de plus, à la surveillance" contains three adverbial expressions that are awkward when placed together in English, and has therefore been translated as: "Immediately, Gisèle once again took to

conscientious watching". The choice is not between right and wrong but between more and less graceful phrasing, and since the latter is largely a matter of rhythm, it sometimes requires alteration of punctuation. Pauses may be added, omitted, or transferred, and sentences may be combined, separated, or overlapped. The previous example shows a change of word order that entails omission of commas. The sentences, "Les femmes jalouses sont les plus trompées. C'est bien connu," are rearranged and combined in the translation, "It's common knowledge that jealous women are the ones most likely to be deceived in love." The arrangement depends more on the judgment of the translator than on established rules.

Even prose writers employ numerous literary devices, each of which poses its own problems. Deliberate alliteration in the original may be impossible to reproduce in translation without sacrificing the sense, or may simply fail to produce the same effect; "ses bras soignés, soyeux, satinés" is better as "her pampered, smooth, silky arms", which retains the original meaning, than as "her smooth, silky, satiny arms", which retains the sound but is redundant. Just as it is desirable to reproduce alliterative effects, if possible, it is necessary to avoid introducing them unintentionally when the sense calls for the juxtaposition of words beginning with the same phoneme. The same observations apply to repetition: the translator should adhere to the usage of the author unless it is ineffective or nonsensical in translation, and should

not create repetition where none exists in the original. Other devices that do not lend themselves to direct translation are often either lost or replaced by approximate equivalents. A prime example is: "Je ne me vois pas attendre trente ans pour qu'un monsieur couronne ma flamme (ça ne se dit plus beaucoup, il me semble). Elle se serait éteinte dans l'intervalle"--which contains a metaphor, an allusion, and a play on words. For reasons of sense, the metaphor "couronner ma flamme" is replaced by "return my love", which in turn substitutes a vague historical impression for the direct allusion to "préciosité". As a further result, the play on words is entirely missing in the translation, but the loss of a single device is more acceptable than the distortion of English required to retain it.

All of the above problems of course apply to the translation of Avec ou sans amour, but it also has peculiar characteristics that require attention. Of particular interest is Claire Martin's vocabulary, which is not French-Canadian but French to the extent of containing several examples of Parisian slang. The choice of the latter is criticized at length by Pierre de Grandpré:

> C'est un phénomène qui se reproduit souvent en littérature et en milieu canadiens-français: ce n'est pas pour faire grossier, drôle, peuple, mais élégant au contraire, que l'on a recours à des mots d'argot comme zigoto, tarabuster, ou à des expressions comme "je m'en fous", "comme de bien entendu". . . Prestiges du cinéma et de la capitale française! Mais influences mal assimilées, ou utilisées hors de propos. . . . A coté de fleurs hybrides de language

> [sic] comme: "c'est un self-nourri", on trouve de contrastantes fleurs artificielles qui portent déjà la poussière de quelques lustres, comme "en baver des ronds de chapeau" ou "en rester comme deux ronds de flanc". Ces dernières expressions s'accompagnent d'ailleurs d'un pudique "comme on dit", qui avoue la gène normale qu'éprouve l'auteur à y recourir.2

The criticism is directed at the author's supposed intention in using such expressions, not at the slang as such, and is therefore unmerited. On rereading Avec ou sans amour, Claire Martin expresses surprise at the omnipresence of slang, but explains that it is native to her personal vocabulary:

> Jeune, j'adorais l'argot. Certaines choses ne me semblaient amusantes que si elles étaient dites dans cette langue qu'on a qualifiée si justement de verte. Avoir le nez de traviole me semblait bien plus ridicule que l'avoir de travers. Je n'avais pas, ce disant, le sentiment de cultiver artificiellement les fleurs du macadam parisien mais celui d'employer l'argot d'une langue qui m'appartient.3

At the same time, the author agrees with the objections of her critics, though she rejects their reasoning: "J'ai docilement donné raison à mes censeurs, non pas que ma conclusion ait été que l'argot ne m'appartenait pas, mais parce que mes réflexions m'ont vite amenée au simple souci de la correction."[4] This statement releases the translator from the obligation of finding equivalent English slang expressions for the benefit of Canadian readers, if the impossibility of the task had not already done so.

At the other end of the scale are words that belong to the literary rather than to the conversational language, and that are frequently used in an unusual context. The word

"autochtones", referring to the neighbours in "Printemps", underlines the distinction between the inhabitants and the strangers who follow Mademoiselle Amélie, but it is too rare in English to have the same humourous effect. On the other hand, the word "fallible" adequately replaces "faillible" as a description of Amélie's delicate ankles. In "Le Cercle fermé", the young Gérard is described as having "l'air éphèbe de sérail"; since "éphèbe" cannot be translated by a single word, and "seraglio" is much less frequent in English than "harem", the expression has been replaced by "harem-boy look", which is weaker but at least not awkward. Other examples occur in "La Portion congrue", where Valérie's legs are said to be "évidées" and the image of Casimir is called "le tendre incube"; the former is translated as "hollow" because "hollowed out" presents a grotesque picture to English readers, but "fond incubus" is retained because the word is familiar enough to be meaningful. As a matter of necessity, therefore, the translation tends to avoid the extremes of popular and literary speech and to maintain a fairly consistent level of language. Of course the level continues to vary according to whether the story is being told through impersonal or personal narration or through conversation.

Besides a wide range of vocabulary, the stories of Claire Martin exhibit a wide range of sentence length, from short and simple to long and complex. Again, this is partly dependent on the difference between narration and conversation,

because the latter generally consists of shorter sentences than the former. The contrast is shown at the beginning of "Le Cercle fermé:

> En entrant j'ai trouvé Renée assise sur le tapis, le dos appuyé au divan, les mains nouées sous la nuque, le visage pâle de bonheur et de déraison. . . . "Qu'est-ce que c'est que cette tête indécente? Tu pavoises en femme heureuse?"

Sometimes, however, Martin employs short sentences in narration in order to create a certain effect. The first paragraph of "Les Mains nues" ("Elle s'ennuyait. Ça n'a rien d'extraordinaire. . . . On rêve. . . . On le fourbit, on l'astique. . . . On recommence. . . ") conveys Elmire's boredom through the repetition of short, mostly simple sentences, which are also appropriate in English translation. Sentence fragments are intended to give an impression of familiarity in "Maladresse": "Un charmant garçon, ce Léon. . . . Pourquoi ne plaquait-il pas Gisèle? Paresse? Peur? Amour? Je ne sais pas. Peut-être aussi cette faiblesse que les femmes subodorent. . . ." Since the nominal sentence is used much less often in English than in French, the translation reads: "A charming boy, Léon. . . Why didn't he drop Gisèle? Was it laziness, fear, love? I don't know. Maybe too it was the weakness that women scent. . . ."; verbs are added and phrases joined in order to avoid abruptness. As usual, it is better to depart from the original phrasing when it would be improper or ineffective in English.

The variety in vocabulary and sentence structure in Claire Martin's work is matched by a variety in tenses. In "Maladresse", after a series of verbs in the definite past, she writes: "Une semaine plus tard, Colette sonne chez moi et m'annonce dès la porte son mariage avec Léon"; the passage continues in the passé composé and then definite past. In French, the present tense gives a sense of immediacy, but in English, it is merely startling. Since the use of the present to describe past events is much more common in French, the translation is put in the past in this instance. In "Les Autres", on the other hand, there is a transition from the definite past to the imperfect, the passé composé, and then the present, beginning with: "Sans que j'aie le temps de rien faire de tout cela, elle tire le gant bleu d'une enveloppe et me la balance sous le nez." Here follow several paragraphs in the present, so that the same tense in English does not appear out of place. The most unusual use of tenses is in "Les Mains nues", where half of the story is told in the imperfect and pluperfect, with authorial commentary in the present and one sentence in the passé composé: "Mais voilà qu'un jour, dans l'autobus, Elmire a trouvé une lettre." The second half is in the definite past and imperfect, with the exception of the last line: "Puis elle a repris son manteau au vestiaire et elle est partie sous la pluie. Avec sa soif." The effect of the pluperfect is to create suspense about what events are to follow,

and the translation retains it; the passé composé once more gives an impression of immediacy, but is indistinguishable from the definite past in English translation.

Claire Martin once said of her own work:

> Je n'ai pas de mon oeuvre une idée assez haute pour parler d'idéal à son propos. J'essaie de faire un travail propre et cela ne me semble pas compatible avec une telle expression. Ce qui me possède, surtout, c'est le désir de contribuer a l'édification de la littérature canadienne-française. . . . Je sais fort bien que mes livres ont peu de valeur--j'ai trop d'admiration pour les grands romanciers pour ne pas me rendre compte des différences qu'il y a entre leurs oeuvres et les miennes--mais s'ils pouvaient inciter quelqu'un qui en a l'étoffe à vouloir faire mieux que moi, j'aurais atteint une manière d'ideal.5

Her modest aspirations have been fulfilled, and her writings have attracted both critics and translators. Whereas Dans un gant de fer is important as a sociological document and as a literary work, Avec ou sans amour merits attention primarily because of its use of language. It is therefore of interest to the translator as an illustration of problems common to all prose translation from French to English, and as an exercise in reproducing the particular flavour of Claire Martin's short story style. In literary translation, however, the emphasis must be on the "literary" rather than on the "translation"; if the translation cannot stand on its own, nothing in the original can justify it.

NOTES - CHAPTER III

[1]Paul Wyczynski, et. al. eds., "Claire Martin," Le Roman canadien français (Ottawa: Fides, 1964), p. 352.

[2]Pierre de Grandpré, "Comment l'esprit vient aux filles," Dix ans de vie littéraire au Canada français (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1966), p. 159.

[3]Claire Martin in Robert Vigneault, ed., "L'Auteur et son oeuvre," Avec ou sans amour (Ottawa: Editions du Renouveau Pédagogique, 1969), p. 9.

[4]Ibid., p. 10.

[5]Paul Wyczynski et al., ed., op. cit., p. 350.

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